A

NEW COLLECTION

Battie of Leith

MORAL TALES,

CHIEFLY WRITTEN BY THE CELEBRATED

MARMONTEL,

AND TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL FRENCH,

BY MR HERON.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOLUME FIRST.

PERTH:

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following TALES are chiefly written by the celebrated MARMONTEL, who has again tried in his old age a ſpecies of writing in which he was extremely ſucceſsful in his youth. Years ſeem to have impaired neither the vigour, nor the delicacy of his genius. Seldom has moral wiſdom been arrayed in a more charming dreſs than it here wears. He has ſkilfully ſelected the characters, the ſituations, the incidents in human life which are the moſt generally intereſting, and has combined them into ſome of the ſweeteſt, happieſt forms that fancy ever created; on the realities of life, he by ſome wonderful art unknown to all but himſelf, at leaſt if

we

we except the author of the Vicar of Wakefield, has conferred a magic power to pleaſe: Two or three Tales by other authors have been introduced into theſe volumes; which however, can hardly do more than ſerve as foils to Marmontel.

We expect that the good old moraliſt will furniſh with materials for another volume.

NEW

MORAL TALES.

LATELY PUBLISHED,

BY MR MARMONTELLE.

ERROR OF A GOOD FATHER.

PART FIRST.

VOLTAIRE being one day indiſpoſed, the ſenſible Vauvenargue, good Cideville, and I, who was at that time a very young man, ſat by his bedſide. He led the converſation upon Terence, and ſpoke of that author's delicate ſimplicity, the purity of his ſtyle, the correct, but faint ſketches of his pencil. For inſtance, ſaid he, that character, which, however ſtrange, is actually a copy from nature, of a father puniſhing himſelf for his harſhneſs to an only ſon, might have been rendered extremely intereſting if the author had poſſeſſed greater energy of genius. We read the firſt ſcene

of the play to which he alluded. You ſee here, ſaid Voltaire, how intereſtingly it begins, and how ſoon it loſes its hold on the heart. Menedemus dwindles immediately into a good, eaſy man, little above a ſimpleton.

I know an old Menedemus, in my native province, ſaid Cideville, who, after a good deal of diſtreſs, is now one of the happieſt of men. Let us hear his ſtory, ſaid Voltaire; and Cideville proceeded thus:

I was initiated in the ſtudy and practice of the law, under Preſident Vaneville, a magiſtrate ſtill more reſpectable for his integrity than for his extenſive knowledge. With him I paſſed the happieſt of my youthful years. He had three ſons; one by a firſt wife, whom he had fondly loved; and two by a ſecond, whom he had married ſince the death of the former, and of whom he was ſtill fonder. I ſuppoſed him happy in his domeſtic connections; for his countenance wore a conſtant air of ſerenity and cheerfulneſs. By degrees, however, his temper altered. I underſtood, ſome time after, that he had ſent his eldeſt ſon to a diſtant ſchool, the maſter of which, the prior of a village in the vicinity of the foreſt of Ly[illegible] favourably ſpoken of. Many

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Many months had not paſſed, when I perceived, that M. de Vaneville was inwardly troubled by ſome extraordinary ſubject of uneaſineſs. He was not of a character to ſuffer what paſſed in his breaſt to be eaſily diſcovered. And I regarded him with too high reſpect, to preſume to enquire into what he did not voluntarily communicate. I only redoubled my aſſiduity to pleaſe him. He ſeemed ſenſible of my concern, and took it kindly, yet did not open his mind to me. Within a few years, he loſt his ſecond wife, and both the ſons he had by her. I expreſſed my ſympathy in his affliction; but he only ſaid, and that with a ſtern air; *Heaven is juſt.* Theſe words were accompanied with a ſigh, and ſucceeded by a long ſilence. At laſt, he gave me notice, that he meant to retire from the world, to a ſmall ſolitary eſtate he had, named Flamais, in the neighbourhood of Neufchatel. He bade me farewel with evident pain. I begged his permiſſion to write to him, and to viſit him, from time to time.

My friend, anſwered he, in a gentle and melancholy tone of voice, I ſhall never forget you. But, you muſt leave me by myſelf for a while. When I recover a reliſh for ſociety, yours will certainly be the firſt company I ſhall wiſh for. Have patience, till you hear from me. He then

embraced me, and added: farewel, Cideville; *never marry a ſecond wife.*

This advice, which ſeemed to have eſcaped from him, when he was not upon his guard, had however no reſpect to his preſent ſituation. He had been twice married, but was now a widower. It was more eſpecially ſince the death of his ſecond wife, that his ſpirits had ſunk into a ſettled melancholy: this I naturally aſcribed therefore, to the ſolitary ſituation in which he was left. He ſet out for his country retreat; for three years I heard nothing from him; and began to ſuppoſe, that he might have forgotten me. I had at length an invitation to go to ſee him. I gladly obeyed the ſummons. Upon my arrival, I found him ſeated at table, and beſide him, a young and handſome country woman; oppoſite to them, a young country man, and beſide *him*, another man, apparently older, plainly dreſſed, but retaining ſtill ſomewhat of the moſt poliſhed air of the town, in his aſpect. My friend himſelf had alſo contracted much of a ruſtic appearance: there was nothing about him to remind me of my old preſident: inſtead of the large, flowing wig to which my eyes had been accuſtomed, his bald front, with only a few white hairs ſcattered

ed over it, now preſented itſelf. It was all that I could do to recognize him.

Come, ſaid he, my friend, ſit down among my family; embrace my ſon, and his wife. She whom you ſee in that plain dreſs, is Mademoiſelle de Leonval, now my daughter-in-law, pupil to that gallant man, my neighbour, M. de Nelcour, to whom I am indebted for all the happineſs of my old days. You have imagined this young couple, I preſume, to be my gardener and his wife? And you are not miſtaken; that is their condition; and mine likewiſe. We work all together in gardens which you ſhall, by and by, ſee.

We had a good, but plain dinner, in the Pythagorean ſtile, conſiſting chiefly of pulſe and other vegetables, with very little animal food, but ſome baſkets of excellent fruits.

Excellent, to be ſure, ſaid Voltaire; but proceed to the gardens. I am impatient to hear what the old man had to tell you. Nay, ſaid Vauvenargue, with your leave, let us ſee the worthy father with his children a few moments longer at table. One is ſo much at home, in the company of ſuch worthy and happy people!—The happineſs of each of

the three, ſaid Cideville, was expreſſed in a peculiar manner. The father had the aſpect of a man whoſe heart had been long oppreſſed with grief, and was now expanded with joy. The ſon ſeemed to be proud that he had at laſt made his father happy: The young woman, with an air of modeſty and ſenſibility, ſeemed to be inwardly delighted that ſhe could contribute to the happineſs of both,—and to enjoy their mutual affection to one another, no leſs than their love for her.

After dinner, we walked into the gardens. Theſe had been formed under the eye, and with the hand of a maſter. Nature was here all luxuriance; plenty was diſtributed on every hand, in a wild but pleaſing confuſion. The vine entwined the branches of the plumb-tree: a quincunx of cherry-trees ſhaded beds of ſtrawberry buſhes: fertile rows of fruit-trees were planted round thoſe plats in which lettuces or melons grew in rich exuberance. All this, ſaid Voltaire, might have a good effect in harmonious verſe. But, my friend, the art of telling a ſtory agreeably in proſe, conſiſts in giving eaſy, ſlight deſcriptions, and paſſing in a graceful, lively manner from ſcene to ſcene.

Well!

Well! well! ſaid Cideville; the reſt of the party no ſooner perceived, that M. de Vaneville wiſhed to be alone with me, than they left us to ourſelves. We ſat down together, under an arbour of honeyſuckle. The good man then took me by the hand. You ſee, ſaid he, how my preſent life paſſes. It is buſy, yet calm and pleaſant. Labour, appetite, ſleep, peace of mind, the intereſt inſenſibly inſpired by the ſcenes of nature, varying with the changing ſeaſons of the year, my pains rewarded, my hopes almoſt every year fulfilled, and, above all the ſatisfaction of witneſſing the mutual love and happineſs of my children;—Theſe are enjoyments which heaven has reſerved to bleſs your friend in his old age. It is not the evening of a fine day; but one of the fineſt evenings, after a day of—gloomy blackneſs and ſtorms.

You ſaw me when my heart was wrung with ſorrow. I concealed the cauſe, but, I may now, dear Cideville, depoſite in your boſom, a ſecret I have ſo long confined to my own.

After the loſs of an amiable and affectionate wife, by whom I had only one ſon, who was ſtill an infant; I felt a painful void in my heart, and was diſtreſſed amid the lonelineſs and ſolitude of my houſe.

Hitherto

Hitherto the domeſtic felicity which I had enjoyed in the evenings, had cheared me after the labours of the day, and compenſated for its fatigues. But now I had only a ſcene of mourning, ſolitude, and ſilence to return to. I could not bear it, and began to deſpair of ever becoming able to accuſtom myſelf to it, when I happened to hear a young lady mentioned, who was of a reſpectable family, and of an age at which the underſtanding, manners, and character are generally conſidered to be fully formed. She was ſpoken of, as a model of good ſenſe, goodneſs of heart, diſcretion, and modeſty. I ſought her acquaintance, and ſaw, or at leaſt thought, I ſaw, that ſhe had not been praiſed above her merits. I obtained her in marriage. Till ſhe became a mother, her conduct fully anſwered my wiſhes and hopes: or rather, to myſelf, ſhe was uniformly the ſame to the time of her death: and it was without my knowledge, and in reſpect only to my ſon by my former wife, that her character altered; her exceſſive maternal affection to her own children, rendering her incapable of due ſentiments of kindneſs to the ſon of another woman.

For ſome ſhort time after our marriage, ſhe had ſhewn almoſt as much fondneſs for my ſon, as if he had been her own. And when this gave place to averſion,

averſion, ſhe concealed that ſo artfully, that I never once perceived it. Cloſely occupied as I was, in the functions of my office, you know whether I could have leiſure to attend to my children's education. This care I was obliged to leave to my wife: thoſe to whom ſhe committed it, were dependent more immediately upon her, than on me: ſo that, even by conſulting them, I could learn nothing but what ſhe choſe, that they ſhould let me know, or make me believe.

Her greateſt ſecret uneaſineſs, which dwelt deep upon her heart, was to think that my child by my firſt wife, had an equal title with her ſons to ſhare my fortune, ſhe looked upon him as a ſtranger who came in, to plunder them of their property. You will naturally conceive how much theſe ſentiments of his mother-in-law and governeſs muſt have contributed to embitter my boy's earlier years. At that age, the human heart has a very quick ſenſe of natural juſtice: And my ſon ſoon became ſenſible that he was unjuſtly dealt with.

I have remarked, ſays Voltaire, that a child, when he thinks himſelf juſtly puniſhed, ſubmits without murmuring. His own heart condemns him. If he rebels, it is becauſe he has been undeſervedly puniſhed.

niſhed. There is then, ſaid Vauvenargue, in his mild voice, a primary law, engraven on the human heart—and who engraved it?—The ſame Being, anſwered Voltaire, who appointed the laws by which my clock performs its movements; the ſame Workman, who hung the great Machine of which the ſpring and balance were diſcovered by Newton. But, let us proceed; for your old man is really intereſting; and he is now waiting for us.

I obſerved, continued M. de Vaneville, a change in my ſon's character. Sadneſs, diffidence, and a gloomy timidity were expreſſed in his countenance. The cares of buſineſs naturally producing a degree of ſerioufneſs and perhaps ſeverity in the expreſſion of my features, my ſon grew fearful of me: That air of fondneſs, that kind and tender reception which had formerly attracted him to approach me with eagerneſs, no longer appeared, to aſſure him of the kindneſs and indulgence of his father. Under the idea of reſpect, they inſpired him with a degree of terror for me, which repreſſed his complaints. Thus kept at an invidious diſtance, chaſtiſed with harſhneſs, whether in fault or not, jealous of the preference continually ſhewn to his two brothers, and ſecretly comparing, in his little feſtered heart, the kindneſs ſhewn to them, with the rigorous

rigorous treatment uſed towards himſelf, he became every day more ſad and ſullen. My cruel reprimands compleated his diſtreſs. He believed himſelf an object of averſion to me—the hatred of his father!—Nature thus loſt its laſt hope, and its laſt conſolation. He ſunk into a ſtupid deſpondency, which was taken for an obſtinate unwillingneſs to apply to any thing uſeful.

I ſometimes tried to reaſon with him; but coldly and harſhly, and without any thing of perſuaſive gentleneſs. He heard me, with his eyes fixed, and ſwimming in tears, which I, unhappy parent that I was, might ſometimes have kiſſed away!—But, his ſilence, which was owing to deſpair, I attributed to a ſullenneſs of ſoul and character. Alas! it was I that was ſullen and harſh to him. I at laſt drove him from me; and he then became abſolutely wild and untractable; Poor child! What ſufferings had he not to bear in ſilence!

His nurſe was his only reſource; when ſhe came to ſee him, he would throw himſelf in her arms, and bathe her boſom with his tears. Oh! my good, my only mother! would he ſay, ſobbing, I have none in the world that loves me, but you, None but you pities me. But, why did you ſuckle me? Why

Why, my Real mother,—my mother whom, alas! I have loſt,—why did ſhe give me life? Why did neither of you ſtrangle me in my cradle? Poor orphan! yes, I am ſo; I have neither father nor mother. A cruel ſtep-mother has hardened and ſhut *her* heart againſt a ſon who is not hers! His nurſe melted into tears, embraced him, ſaid every thing that her tenderneſs could ſuggeſt to conſole him; but, all in vain; and, as the laſt aggravation of his diſtreſs, and of her cruelty, my wife happening to over-hear the ſcenes of ſorrow which paſſed between my ſon and his nurſe Juliana, and ſuſpecting perhaps that this good woman might ſpeak to me on the ſubject, forbade her to come back.

My ſon came to know of this. He was now twelve years of age; and had acquired ſome degree of energy in his character. He broke out, for the firſt time, in reproaches againſt his mother-in-law, —told her that, out of reſpect for me, he had hitherto borne all her ill uſage patiently; but that to envy him his laſt and ſole conſolation, to deprive him of the liberty of ſeeing his nurſe, in order that not even the ſhadow of a mother might remain to him, was a piece of barbarity which none but an inhuman ſtep-mother could be guilty of!—and that, as to him ſhe was abſolutely a Fury, he was determined

mined to flee from her. Prevail with my father whoſe heart you have hardened againſt me, to drive me out of his houſe. It is the laſt favour his child requeſts.

You will readily ſuppoſe, that theſe complaints would be repreſented to me in the very worſt light they could bear. *An inhuman ſtep-mother, a Fury, a hard-hearted father;* ſtrong language this, at his years! It muſt be diſtreſſing to you, and I feel it to be extremely ſo, myſelf, to ſee ſuch a character declare itſelf ſo deciſively in a child! But, perhaps nature is not ſo inflexible, at ſo tender an age. I have heard mention made of a good man in a priory in the neighbourhood of the foreſt of Lyons, who boards children, and brings them up with the greateſt care. He excels particularly in ſubduing obſtinacy, and bending the moſt ſtubborn ſpirits to docility and mildneſs. She mentioned farther ſeveral inſtances in which he had ſucceeded, and perceiving me to be much diſtreſſed; what ſay you, then? continued ſhe; this is perhaps an evil from which good may come. Your ſon ſeems to poſſeſs great vigour of mind: But his violent temper muſt be ſubdued; otherwiſe, there is no degree of extravagance to which it may not in time tranſport him.

What could I advance in oppoſition to ſuch advice? eſpecially as I was perſuaded, that my ſon's impetuoſity proceeded from a naturally bad temper. I agreed to what ſeemed to be the boy's own deſire. The place mentioned was a ſolitary village in the depth of a foreſt; none could be more eligible.

On the day of his departure, when he came to take leave of me, he approached with a ſerious ſedate air which would have ſurprized me, even in a man. Go, my ſon, ſaid I, learn to get the better of your froward temper; after ſome time, I hope to ſee you return more moderate and docile. Embrace me; Farewel. At this moment, his little heart was like to burſt. Inſtead of coming to my arms, the poor fellow kneeled before me, and gave me *his* hand———Ah! my friend, methinks, I ſtill feel the glowing impreſſion of his lips upon *mine*. Thou art not then abſolutely inſenſible! ſaid I, ſeeing him heave the moſt violent ſobs. I inſenſible! ah! my father! ſaid he, in a piercing voice.—Well, then, returned I, if thou haſt any native goodneſs in thee; if thou haſt any affection for thy father, promiſe to correct thy temper. Correct? returned he in a voice interrupted by tears and ſobs. What is your child's crime? That he has no longer a mother! That he has——Here he

he ſtopped, and turning his eyes upon me with a look that pierced me to the very heart: O my father, ſaid he, in the name of her who is no more, bleſs your child: he is going from you. He was proſtrate at my feet; and while I gave him my bleſſing, he wept over them.

I was ſoftened, no leſs than he: nature ſpeaking in his looks and in my heart, had nearly reconciled us. I was opening my arms to receive him. My lips were ready to pronounce his pardon. Alas! What diſtreſs would not one other word have ſpared me!

But that very moment his mother-in-law with her two children came in. Riſe, my ſon, ſaid I, kiſs your mother's hand, and aſk her bleſſing. At theſe words, his tears ceaſed, his whole ſoul ſeemed to be ſhocked, and a look of indignation was all the farewel he gave my wife. I bade him embrace his brothers; but he turned ſternly from them—returned, and kneeled again before me. Forgive me, father, ſaid he, I love, I revere you; but compel me not to kiſs the hand that oppreſſes me: command me not to embrace——Riſe, unnatural child, ſaid I, I know you not; and as he retired, with all

the wildneſs of deſpair in his countenance; Let him be gone, cried I, and never again appear before me.

The froward, paſſionate caſt which I had obſerved in his temper, and my perſuaſion that his averſion for his mother-in-law was unreaſonable, with my hope, that diſtance, age, the cares and leſſons of a maſter, who was truly a good man, might correct what was amiſs in his natural temper—theſe conſiderations, I ſay, ſoothed my mind under the painful impreſſions which the tenderneſs he ſhewed at bidding me farewel, had at firſt made upon it; and in his abſence I ſaw nothing but the proſpect of good for both him and me.

But, the unfortunate prepoſſeſſion which had injured him with his father, continued to purſue him in the houſe of his teacher. That good man was a compound of ruſticity and pedantry. You will eaſily ſuppoſe, then, that he could not be a fit perſon to correct a character which had been repreſented to him, as invincibly ſtubborn, and which he was directed to break, if he could not bend it. Severity of diſcipline, a harſh addreſs, ſtrict confinement, frequent threats, and corporal chaſtiſement;—in ſhort, the moſt diſguſting and imperious tyranny, the moſt rigid ſlavery, formed the ſyſtem of education

cation to which my child was now ſubjected. He could not bear it; but conceived a mortal averſion for all the taſks which his ſtern maſter preſcribed.

But, what gave him the moſt pain, was to hear, whenever he complained of the diſagreeable circumſtances in his ſituation, that, ſuch was the pleaſure of a juſtly irritated parent. Juſtly irritated! cried he, weeping bitterly. Ah! did he but know! Ah! did he but know the heart of his child! Periſh the wretches who have irritated the heart of a good father againſt his child! Periſh the ſerpent who daily diſtills its poiſon againſt him! When his maſter blamed him for his diſlike to ſtudy; it is not ſtudy, he would ſay, but life that I diſlike; and I know not why I ſhould not inſtantly free myſelf from the load.

Severe as his maſter was, he ſometimes found it neceſſary to calm his own paſſions, in order to ſoothe the boy. My ſon thus enjoyed occaſional intervals of relaxation. But, at ſuch times, he would always retire to ſolitude; and when he was found by himſelf, abſorbed in melancholy, and was aſked the cauſe: I am ſick, was his anſwer.—Where are you affected? Here, would he reply, ſtriking on his breaſt.

Had I known then, what I now know, I ſhould have become ſenſible of my injuſtice to him; and ſhould have gone, in ſpite of my wife, to embrace and conſole my unhappy child. But one careſs from me, one, however ſlight, mark of my affection would have changed his character; his heart would have been ſoftened, and he would have melted into tenderneſs in my arms. But, it was never to me that his maſter wrote: I never ſaw any part of his letters but what was calculated to embitter my ſpirit againſt my boy. But, the moſt atrocious act of cruelty which I can hardly pardon even to the aſhes of her who was once dear to me, was the keeping back of my ſon's letters, which he wrote to me, in the bitterneſs of his diſtreſs.

It was the deſpair to which my ſilence reduced him, that made him take his final reſolution. He eloped. The foreſt favoured his eſcape; and in a ſingle night he was entirely out of the reach of people who could not very readily purſue him.

When I received the news of his elopement, or poſſibly his death, I felt all the diſtreſs which it was natural for ſo unfortunate an accident to produce in the breaſt of a father. But my wife had the addreſs to divert my concern by pretending to view it only

only as a youthful folly, and aſſuring me that within a few days, my ſon would either be brought back, or would return of himſelf. In the mean time, we agreed to make no noiſe of the matter. But, I ſpared no pains to recover him. What miſled me, was the ſuppoſition that my ſon might have gone on board ſome merchant ſhip, as the children of the common people often do when they elope from their parents. I wrote to the different ſea-port towns, and deſcribed, without naming him. But, all my enquiries, however careful, proved vain: and after ſix months of unſucceſsful ſearch, and idle hope, I concluded, that my ſon was no more.

No means were neglected, that could be thought of to divert my ſorrow, and fix my whole tenderneſs upon my two remaining children. But, as if nature had determined to revenge herſelf for the cruelties of a ſtep-mother, thoſe two children were taken from us, on a ſudden, as if ſtrangled by ſome unſeen arm; that infectious diſtemper which is commonly ſo fatal to the firſt ſtages of life, cut them both off together. Their mother, inconſolable for her loſs, ſoon followed them to the grave.

My

My diſtreſs was now at its greateſt height. But, not believing myſelf guilty, I ſhould have borne with fortitude all the rigour of my deſtiny; had not Heaven, whoſe juſtice leaves no crimes unpuniſhed, led me to diſcover in the bottom of a drawer, the torn pieces of the letters which my poor ſon had written to me in his exile, but which had been kept up by my wife. Ah! my friend, it was at this ſeaſon, that oppreſſive weight of ſorrow under which you ſaw me overpowered, firſt ſettled on my heart.

In what affecting language thoſe letters were written! I recollect the laſt of them; and you ſhall hear it. "What! father! ſaid he, not one word to comfort your unhappy child! Ten ſuppliant and tender letters, ten letters wet with the tears of an innocent child, who only begs that you would not hate him, have failed of obtaining me this laſt favour! O my father! write to me: would you but ſay: *My ſon I hate you not;* this were enough, theſe dear words written by your hand ſhould be kiſſed a thouſand times a-day, ſhould be imprinted on my lips, and engraven on my heart. For you, this heart is full of tenderneſs and reſpect: it is not of you that it complains; ceaſe then to rend and torment it. Till now it has had fortitude to bear all:

but

but the ſilence, neglect, forgetfulneſs, or hatred of a father is more than it can endure; it muſt be cruſhed under the cruel load."

Conceive, if you can, continued M. de Vaneville, my extreme diſtreſs and indignation. Thus to intercept my ſon's letters, and to make *him* believe that I had forſaken him,—*me* that he braved my anger! Nothing could be more criminal; but it was only to you, the guilty and unhappy ſecret was revealed.

Behold, ſaid Voltaire, how, the ſweeteſt and tendereſt ſentiment of nature, a mother's love for her children, may become guilty and fatal even to herſelf, when ſuffered to riſe to any pitch of extravagance! Alas! ſaid Vauvenargue, all our paſſions are the progeny of ſelf-love; the more unjuſt and cruel they are, ſo much the more do they reſemble their parent.

My old friend, reſumed Cideville, proceeded next to tell me, how that being now more lonely than ever in his domeſtic ſituation, he was haunted by tormenting reflections. I now recollected a thouſand inſtances of the hatred which that unjuſt woman had conceived for my boy, and which I ought to

to have diſcerned through all the diſguiſes by which ſhe ſtrove to conceal it. Sometimes I accuſed nature, that ſhe had not ſpoken to my heart, in behalf of my own blood. I was enraged at myſelf, to think, that I could be capable of ſuch blindneſs and weakneſs. Sometimes I curſed myſelf for refuſing to liſten to nature's voice. My houſe became a place of horror to me; when I went abroad into the world, methought the eyes of all ſeemed to aſk me for my ſon; and I could not bear it. You were then acquainted with my reſolution to retire and hide myſelf in ſolitude.

I was juſt ſetting out, when to complete my miſery, Juliana, the nurſe of my unfortunate ſon, having learnt that I had loſt him, came to ſee me, all in tears, and while her heart was full, revealed to me what had paſſed in their ſecret converſations. Never father ſuffered what I felt, at hearing her ſtory. I ſaw all the mortification and diſtreſs he had ſuffered, without daring once to complain to me. I ſaw, that while his heart was ſo cruelly torn, his love and reſpect for me were unalterable.—I ſaw, that I had been a bad father to the beſt of ſons. And, perhaps he is now no more, ſaid I, throwing myſelf down, and I am the cauſe of his death, and my crime is irreparable.

The

The poor woman, mingling her tears with mine, ſtrove to conſole me. No, ſir, ſaid ſhe, he ſtill lives, unleſs they have had the cruelty to attempt his life—and God keep me from thinking this poſſible!—or ſome accident have ſhortened his days. Twenty times has he ſaid to me, in the utmoſt height of his diſtreſs, that if his life were his own, he ſhould know at once what to do: but then the amiable child, lifting up his hands and eyes to heaven, would fervently exclaim: No, it is thine, O my God! thou gaveſt me this life of bitterneſs and ſorrow; and thou alone haſt a right to take it away; but thou beholdeſt what I endure: only, compenſate my ſufferings by reſtoring to me, one day or another, my father's affections; in his arms, I ſhall forget all that I have ſuffered.

My hopes now revived: but then I thought of what he was ſtill ſuffering; and all conſolation vaniſhed from my heart. I ſhould have thought it a crime in me to indulge the fainteſt emotion of joy. The plainneſs and ſimplicity of a rural life had too many pleaſures in it. I could not forgive myſelf even thoſe moments of amuſement which the cultivation of my gardens afforded. This labour, ſaid I, is voluntary and pleaſing: that to which my ſon's misfortunes have condemned him, is hard and unremitting

remitting: I divert myſelf with adorning a piece of fertile ground: while he perhaps ſtruggles in the ſweat of his brow againſt a barren and unkindly ſoil: at my table plain and wholeſome food is ſerved up in great plenty; but I know not if he is not often put off with a ſcanty pittance of black bread, wet with his tears? Perhaps he may be in a ſhip at the mercy of the billows, toſſed to and fro by tempeſts, worn out by the toils of the day, and diſturbed at night by bluſtering winds and driving rains? while I ſleep ſound, and at my eaſe—Oh! no, it never was ſound,—the ſleep in which I was conſtantly haunted by my ſon's image. At table, I thought I ſaw him pale and languiſhing before me; and all the food that I taſted had a mixture of bitterneſs. At laſt, ſhall I ſay it? when I was alone, and fancy thus brought the image of my child before me, tears flowed from my eyes, I ſtretched out my arms to my ſon and intreated his pardon.

In this manner, my friend, did I ſpend three years in my retirement, a companion in the labours of thoſe good peaſants to whom *providence* has granted a native cheerfulneſs of temper, to make ſome compenſation for the hardſhips of their way of life, but who could not help taking part in my affliction. I can give you but a faint idea of this long

long ſeaſon of mourning to a father's ſoul; this long night of dark diſtreſs.

Still however, I knew not what was become of my ſon? or how I might recover him? this I ſhall leave him to give you an account of, himſelf, when you and he are alone together. The young couple and their friend now came up with us. We walked towards a ſpot, where we had a fine proſpect of the agriculture of the ſurrounding country, and ſaw the ſun ſetting in majeſtic beauty.

ERROR OF A GOOD FATHER.

Part Second.

NEXT day, the young man and I walked out together, and he took up the ſtory of his elopement where his father had broken off.

Sir, If my father has related to you the ſtory of my childhood, you know my wrongs. My temper was naturally violent: and my ſenſibility was put to the moſt painful trials. I could not moderate it;

and hence aroſe our misfortunes. My mother was dead; and my father was all to me. I loved him in my heart, and was jealous of his affection. My jealouſy rendered me gloomy, peeviſh, and intractable. My father deſpaired of ſoftening my character, and ſent me from him. In my exile, where I ſhould have been tenderly dealt with, I was treated harſhly: I fancied that I could not poſſibly be more unhappy than I then was, and accordingly eloped. I had prevailed with a ſhepherd boy of my own age to exchange clothes with me; and in this diſguiſe; I made off. I travelled by night, avoided the villages, and proceeded through by-paths till I might reach ſome diſtant farm where a ſhepherd was wanted. I at laſt found what I wiſhed in a hamlet near Fleury and Aumale.

In this free, eaſy condition, where I had plenty of bread and milk, ſlept upon freſh ſtraw, and awaked by day-break to lead out my flock to the paſture; I might have been happy enough, had it not been for a mixed recollection of the diſtreſs I had ſuffered, and the diſpleaſure of my father, whom I repreſented to myſelf as irritated, denouncing threats, ſteeling his heart againſt me, and preparing to puniſh my elopement with unrelenting ſeverity, if I ſhould be diſcovered.

After

After ſome months, my uneaſineſs ceaſed, and I had the mortifying ſatisfaction to find that I was either neglected or forgotten. My affliction then became more calm, but at the ſame time ſunk deeper upon my heart. The ſtillneſs of the country, and the wide ſolitude through which I daily roved, contributed to thicken and ſettle the gloom which hung over my mind. Eſpecially, when I thought of the diſtance which ſeparated me from my father, I would ſay to myſelf, *I ſhall ſee him no more;* and then my heart became abſolutely deſpondent. My weak head could not have ſtood theſe reiterated ſhocks, had I not fortunately reſerved to myſelf one agreeable mean of amuſement. It was not ſtudy, but the irkſome circumſtances attending it that I had diſliked; when I eloped therefore I could not part with my dear book: Virgil ſtill accompanied me. The Eclogues gave me the ſociety of Tityrus and Melibœus, and I called myſelf Alexis. The Georgics gave my new ſituation a degree of dignity in my eyes: I ſaw my admired poet ennoble the country life; and I read him with pride.

As I was one day engaged in this intereſting reading, under the ſhade of an old willow-tree, I happened to fall aſleep. During my ſlumbers, this M. de Nelcour, who had retired from the world,

and had good reaſon for ſomewhat of a miſanthropic averſion for ſociety which he had conceived, happened to paſs by. He was ſtruck at the ſight of a book open in the hand of a young ſhepherd. It was a ſingularity that ſurpriſed him. He ſtooped to obſerve what the book might be, and ſaw, that it was Virgil. He would not diſturb me, but, continuing his walk, kept within ſight of the willow-tree, and when he ſaw me awake, came up to me.

Young man, ſaid he, I have ſeen beſide you, ſomething very ſtrange, a book open, and that book Virgil. Is it Virgil, you are reading? If your education has been ſuch as to enable you to read Virgil, by what misfortune, pray, have you been reduced to this condition?

It is nowiſe impoſſible, anſwered I, that an orphan who has received a good education, ſhould be reduced to diſtreſs. This is my caſe. He aſked whence I came, and what was my name and family. I am called Alexis, ſaid I; I belong to this hamlet; It is unneceſſary for me to tell you more. He diſcovered ſurpriſe at my obſtinate concealment of my ſecret; and I no leſs, that an accidental paſſenger ſhould have any curioſity to know more concerning me.

me. The ſpirit of my reply impreſſed him with eſteem for me.

I am well pleaſed, ſaid he, to ſee you ſo prudent, although ſo young. Ah! that I had, in due time, been equally cautious of truſting ſtrangers! But my curioſity, ſaid he, is ſo natural and ſo juſt, that you ought at leaſt to ſuppoſe it innocent. Your youth and your misfortune inſpire a degree of intereſt, which is ſurely ſufficient to juſtify me.

I begged his excuſe for my indiſcreet anſwer to a queſtion prompted by his benevolence. But, Sir, ſaid I, why ſhould I revive in my mind, the memory of what I once was, but am now no more? It can only ſerve to renew and increaſe my uneaſineſs. I have no deſire to be known in any other character than that of a ſhepherd, as I am. Neither in your eyes nor my own, need I be aſhamed of being ſo. Virgil tells us, that the gods were ſhepherds: but every body in the world knows not, how much the paſtoral life has been and ſtill ought to be honoured. I ſhall venture then, although I know not who you are, to intreat you not to betray me. I am a poor deſtitute child. But, I earn my livelihood by making myſelf uſeful; and if you take any indiſcreet advantage of the ſecret you have ſurpriſed

from me, while I was aſleep, you will diſturb the innocent life which I lead. In the name of whatever is deareſt to you in the world, continued I, promiſe me, that you will keep it.

I promiſe, ſaid he;—on condition, that you allow me to come hither, and ſpend ſome hours, beſide you and your flock, every day. I am acquainted with misfortune, as well as you, my dear child; and like you have a turn for ſtudy, and am fond of Virgil. We ſhall read him together; and when we are better known to one another, mutual confidence will improve our converſation.

What! cried Voltaire, did he not carry him with him? Have patience, ſaid Vauvenargue; he did not know him; and, for any thing he knew, Alexis might, as yet, be only a little idle run away. What although he were? ſaid Voltaire. He read Virgil, was proud of the character of a ſhepherd, and could bear misfortune.

This worthy man, returned Alexis (for ſuch was his preſent name) came every day to ſee me, while I fed my flock. We ſpent together a part of ſome of the fineſt days in autumn: And thoſe days flowed ſweetly on. Virgil, Horace, with whom he made me

me acquainted, and whom I began to reliſh as well as he; with ſeveral French books which he brought out, and made me read, Montaigne, La Fontaine, Racine, and Fenelon, agreeably employed our leiſure.

But, at intervals, when our reading was interrupted, M. de Nelcour from time to time endeavoured to draw from me the ſecret of my misfortune. Is it poſſible, ſaid he, one day, that a child like you can find no one in his family, or even in the whole world, to pity him? I have aſked no perſon's pity, anſwered I. Young as I am, I know that in the world, the unfortunate are thought troubleſome.

Ah! and it is but too true! ſaid he, (for I had unconſciouſly touched upon the wound that feſtered in his heart) and he now related to me, that he had been in his youth, what is called an amiable man, and had ruined himſelf by his liberality. Of an hundred good friends who had attended his ſuppers and other entertainments, not one had offered him the leaſt aſſiſtance in the decline of his fortune. The woman who had admired him as a model of gallantry and agreeable manners, no ſooner heard of the fall of his fortune than they found him changed to an object of horror. He then determined upon

upon an immediate retrenchment of his expences, ſold his property, paid his debts, and retired to a ſmall farm in the neighbourhood, the only part of his eſtate that remained to him.

I heard him with eager intereſt, while he gave me an account of his follies, his vain credulity, his illuſions, his errors, yet ſtill his confidence did not command mine in return. So finding that I ſtill eluded all his attempts to draw my ſecret from me, he wiſely reſolved to pry into it no farther, but leave it to come of itſelf. Dear Alexis, ſaid he, one day to me, winter, you know, is coming on, and we ſhall ſee one another, no more. Do you know, that the thought of this makes me uneaſy? It makes me uneaſy too, replied I, ſighing. Why then, returned he, ſhould we give uneaſineſs to one another? Why need we ſeparate? I live a quiet, ſolitary life in the village of Fleury, near your farm. I have ſtill preſerved enough out of the wreck of my fortune, wherewith to make my old age happy. Come you, and be happy with me. My moſt pleaſing care is the education of a young girl who is an orphan. If you will accept the ſame aſylum, I ſhall have two children inſtead of one.

Sir,

Sir, ſaid I, your favours are conferred with a degree of frankneſs, which makes it my duty to open my mind to you. My predominant paſſion is the love of liberty: and I conſider no man as free, ſave him, who depends only on nature and himſelf, and by his labour, forces his nouriſhment from the earth. I would be that man. I would be Virgil's huſbandman or gardener.

With me, ſaid he, you ſhall be both. You ſhall have a good farm to manage, and an excellent garden to cultivate. This is what I propoſe. In the management of the farm, I am ſtill but a novice; we ſhall ſtudy the art of huſbandry together. In gardening I believe I can give you ſome leſſons. Such a proſpect determined me at once; I took leave of my maſter and followed M. de Nelcour.

He had a garden which I found in wonderfully good order; and a lovely girl, named Natalia, nine years of age. In this lovely child, ſaid he, you ſee the comfort of my ſolitary life. She is not my own daughter; but the mutual attachment between her and me is become ſo habitual, that it has acquired the force of natural affection, and the ties of adoption have connected us with the ſame ſtrength, as if they were the bonds of conſanguinity. I married

her

her mother, the widow of M. de Leonval, a captain of granadiers, who was killed at the aſſault of Denaim, and thus adopted his daughter whom he had left without fortune, and was proud to acquit my country in this manner of the debt ſhe owed that brave man. Natalia's character had already begun to open in the moſt favourable manner; ſhe was little leſs dear to me than to her mother, and by her little endearments rendered our union ſtill more and more affectionate, and more and more happy. But, our happineſs was of ſhort duration; and Natalia and I had ſoon to lament the death, ſhe of a good mother, and I of an excellent wife. My friend, ſaid ſhe on her death-bed, I bequeath my daughter to your care, and ſhe is all that I have to bequeath. Be to her both father and mother. I promiſed that I would; and I have kept my word. But, as I have now no fortune to leave my dear child; I bring her up in a taſte for the manners, enjoyments, and pleaſures of the country. This farm and houſe ſhall be her dowry.

I know not what M. de Nelcour might have in his mind when he ſpoke thus to me. But, for my own part, I from that time began to indulge ſome diſtant hope of becoming, one day, the huſband of Natalia; and began even then to feel that tender regard

regard for her, which, as ſhe and I grew up, gradually ripened into love.

I was now dear to M. de Nelcour; and in our labour, reading, walking, and attention to the education of Natalia, the moſt precious of all our plants, we were conſtant aſſociates. Our days were buſy, and our nights tranquil. Months and ſeaſons thus ſtole away, at Fleury, with the quickneſs of thought. And M. de Nelcour frequently repeated, that he had left nothing in the world, that could now deſerve from him one reflection of regret. But, I had left a father: and his image would often ſeem to riſe up before me, and reproach me for making myſelf at a diſtance from him.

The lovely, engaging Natalia, with a charming docility repaid all our pains in her education. The life of activity which ſhe led, after our example, contributed much to improve her figure, as ſhe grew up. She was ſlender and agile like the pliant ſhoots which ſhe had planted; her complexion was freſh as the fruits, and bright as the flowers which grew under her hands: and while ſhe wrought in the garden, with ſometimes the pruning hook in her hand, ſometimes a hurdle upon her head, or a baſket

baſket under her arm, ſhe appeared more charming than the goddeſs whoſe gifts ſhe was gathering.

Farewel ſtudy, ſaid Voltaire; the garden is now to engroſs every thought. Oh! no, replied Cideville; ſtudy had ſtill its turn; and in its purſuits, the ingenuous diſpoſitions, the underſtanding, and the heart of Natalia, the whole of her character, and ſometimes, ſentiments of tenderneſs with which ſhe now began to be animated, appeared to the fulleſt advantage.

Natalia, as well as I, ſaid Alexis, became ſenſible of the progreſs which mutual friendſhip was making in the hearts of both. But we were both far from ſuffering any uneaſineſs from it. Pleaſed to be together, and intereſted in one another, ſhe, with her gentle gaiety, and I with my melancholy, we breathed love like air, and were happy in meeting each other's eyes, as in viewing the light of day. A happy ſecurity ſaved us from all danger. But, the time came when M. de Nelcour, who ſaw farther than we, and was a little more anxious, would no longer truſt to our innocence; and when Natalia was ſixteen years of age, he determined to know from myſelf whether I was willing to unite my fate with her's; and if I ſhould refuſe, to ſend me from her.

Alexis,

Alexis, ſaid he, have not I waited with great patience for your full confidence? ſurely you owe ſo much to my friendſhip; yet, ſtill you refuſe it; I complain not. But, at the age you have now attained, I may no longer keep you about me, unleſs you connect yourſelf with us by the moſt ſacred ties; it remains with yourſelf to ſay, whether you have any right to pretend to what I allude to.

Yes, Sir, I ſhould have a right; my birth entitles me to ſo much; but my misfortunes forbid; I am in diſgrace with a father, who, alas! has been cruelly impoſed upon, and is no leſs to be pitied than I; for he is beſet with perſons who are enemies to his blood, and by their malice abuſe his goodneſs. He is juſt, but weak, and alas! it is his ſecret, not my own, I have thought it my duty to conceal from you. I have avoided naming him, that I might not ſeem to accuſe him, and that I might not reduce you to the cruel alternate of either giving me up to his reſentment, or of detaining me from him. Blame not then a ſilence which has been extremely painful to myſelf. You ſhall know who I am, if ever heaven reſtore me the indulgence and affection of a father. Then, if it be not then too late, ſhall Alexis lay at the feet of Natalia, of your lovely child, the fortune which his birth once taught

him to hope. Till that time muſt I leave you, with a heart filled with ſorrow, gratitude, and love. You will not forget me, Sir; ſtill deign to love me, for you ſhall ever be dear to my heart.

My friend, ſaid he, I am happy to know, that your reſerve has been owing to ſo honourable a principle. Yes, doubtleſs, they are unworthy children who clamorouſly complain of any wrongs they ſuffer from their parents. But, I ſhould do you a cruel injury, if I allowed you to leave me, without ſecuring you a place; I have one to offer you. Not far from this, in the village of Flamais, near Neufchatel, is a reſpectable man who has for ſome time, lived there, in retirement, and who, I am told, employs his time much in the ſame way as I. He at preſent wants a good gardener. I am, I believe, ſo far known to him, that he will accept you upon my recommendation. He is Preſident Vaneville.

Judge what I felt upon hearing this name: ſtruck, and confounded as I was, I was ready to fall down breathleſs. I felt my voice die away on my lips. He perceived me pale, ſpeechleſs, and incapable of motion, and attributed this appearance of ſudden illneſs to my love to Natalia, and the pain my heart felt at the thought of parting from her. Come, my friend,

friend, ſaid he, have courage. To part, muſt no doubt, be painful to us all; but our ſituation renders it unavoidably neceſſary.

I made no anſwer: my thoughts were other than what he ſuppoſed. I felt the moſt earneſt deſire to ſee my father again. But, I ſuppoſed, at the ſame time, that I ſhould find my mortal enemy, and her two children with him. In what manner, would I be received?

The gentleman to whom I propoſe to offer your ſervices, is probity itſelf, ſaid M. de Nelcour. He has an air of auſterity; but all the world allow him the greateſt goodneſs of nature. He is melancholy; but his melancholy renders his character the more intereſting, for he has experienced no ſmall ſhare of affliction. He has loſt his wife and two children, the ſole hopes of their marriage. He lives alone at Flamais, and gives himſelf to the indulgence of grief. It will, I hope, be matter of comfort to him, to have with him, a young man ſo good and eſtimable as you.

Theſe news produced a ſudden change in my ſentiments. But, inſtead of the joy which it was natural for me to feel, I was affected with a ſort of

religious horror; for a train of ſuch misfortunes ſucceeding each other ſo rapidly, had the appearance of a puniſhment inflicted by the immediate hand of heaven. From that moment you may ſuppoſe my reſolution to have been taken. Yes, Sir, ſaid I, write to him, make an offer of my ſervices to that virtuous recluſe; but mention nothing of what you know concerning me.

He wrote, and praiſed my manners, character, and ſkill in the art of gardening, and without ſaying any thing of my early education, promiſed that he would anſwer for me. I was accordingly accepted, and ſet out; but my impatience to ſee my father again, did not render me inſenſible to the pain of parting with my dear Natalia. Farewel, Natalia, ſaid I. Although I leave you, I cannot forego the hope of dedicating myſelf, one day, ſolely to your ſervice. May the young trees which we have planted and cultivated together, remind you ſometimes of Alexis! While you gather theſe apples, and theſe peaches, beautiful like yourſelf, would you only now and then breathe a wiſh, that Alexis were gathering them with you!

The lovely girl ſhed ſome tears, and in a tone of voice which ſenſibly affected me, ſaid, Farewel, Alexis,

Alexis, I would be ſorry indeed, were I never to ſee you again. Remember Natalia.

I took the way to Flamais; and my heart was tumultuouſly agitated with joy, hope, and anxious fear. I was going to ſee my father again, but to ſee him while he ſtill lamented a wife whom I had offended, and two ſons whom I had treated with ſcorn. Had I been more docile and ſubmiſſive, I might ſtill have remained to him; had I but repreſſed my reſentment, and borne, with patience, the harſhneſs of a ſtep-mother, he might have had in me a ſon to wipe away his tears. But, unfortunate wretch that I was! after my diſobedience, elopement, and wicked deſertion of him, how ſhould I appear before him? Might I but have time, before he could diſcover who I was, to make amends for the errors of my paſt conduct, to ſoothe his reſentment, and to revive in his heart the ſentiments of paternal tenderneſs? Seven years of abſence from him, ſpent in hard labour, during which all my features were altered, and my hair and complexion had become darker, my ſimpleneſs and ruſtic air might, I thought, have changed me ſo far that any other would hardly know me; but, a father's eyes might be more diſcerning. Well, then, ſaid I to myſelf, if nature ſpeak within him and betray me, I ſhall ſeize the

moment, and throw myſelf at his feet; and implore not his indulgence but his pity. But, in this caſe, I would receive my pardon as a criminal ſpared by his judge's compaſſion. And who could know, if he would not look upon M. de Nelcour as an accomplice with his ſon, who had inhumanly concealed him from a father's purſuit? Ah! if this idea ſhould ſtrike him, I might no longer hope to conciliate his favour, or good will to our lovely Natalia. Theſe reflections occupied my mind, while I was on my way from Fleury to Flamais; and I arrived there, all trembling for fear, leſt I ſhould be known by my father.

Alas! whether his eyes had been ſo weakened by long continued weeping that he could not diſcriminate my features, or I was really ſo much changed that I no longer appeared the ſame perſon,—he had not the ſmalleſt ſuſpicion, that it was his ſon who was ſent back to him. But, what a ſudden and deep impreſſion did I feel, at ſight of him! Sorrow, rather than age, had wrinkled his brow. The tears I had coſt him, ſeemed to have furrowed his cheeks. Affliction had bowed him towards the grave.

O God

O God of nature! thou knoweſt how nearly emotions of affection and ſorrow had overpowered me, and made me caſt myſelf at his feet. But, I ſuddenly felt myſelf intimidated and reſtrained by remorſe, and by that air of ſadneſs and ſeverity which the wound that feſtered in his heart had communicated to his countenance. I, with a tremour, which would naturally ſeem the effect of ruſtic baſhfulneſs, aſſured him of my reſpectful obedience, and my diſpoſition to ſerve him with cheerfulneſs and fidelity. He bade me follow him, led me into his garden, aſſigned me my taſks, and then carried me to the little dwelling which I was to occupy, and till I ſhould have eſtabliſhed myſelf in it, kindly provided for all my wants. To-morrow, ſaid he, as he left me, I ſhall be at work myſelf, by the dawn of day.

I ſlept very little that night, as you may well think. But, I felt inexpreſſible comfort in finding myſelf near my father, unknown to him, and placed in the moſt favourable ſituation I could deſire, in order to merit his kindneſs, and to ſhew him, how greatly I was changed. Nothing eaſier than to ſhew him invariable ſweetneſs of temper, the moſt perfect docility, and reſpectful obedience. It would be more my pleaſure, than my duty, to prevent all his

his wiſhes; and in his gardener he ſhould find a degree of ſanctified reſpect and filial piety which might lead him to recognize and to pardon his unhappy ſon. But, that I might diſſemble and reſtrain the emotions of nature within me, courage was requiſite; and this virtue I flattered myſelf, that I ſhould be able to exert.

Next morning, I was in the garden by day-break, and found my dear maſter there before me. He and I continued to work in ſilence, which was only now and then interrupted by a few words, after long pauſes. He aſked whence I came. From Anet, anſwered I: and this was the only lie I made to him. Does your father ſtill live?—Yes, thank heaven.—And your mother?—She is no more. Here he uttered a deep ſigh.—And how is your father employed?—He works in the gardens.—Is he ſtill young?—He is advancing in years.—Has he any children beſide you?—No, he has none but me. —And have you left him?—It was his own pleaſure that I ſhould.—Is he at his eaſe then ſo that he can live without you?—Yes; but if I merit my maſters favour, I hope that he will bring us together near himſelf. Alexis, ſaid he, behave to me as you did to M. de Nelcour, be prudent, induſtrious and honeſt, and I promiſe you that you ſhall in a ſhort time

time ſee your father here. I ſhould be ſorry to divide you from him. As he ſpoke theſe words he turned from me, and I ſaw him wipe his eyes.

I have ſince reminded him of that firſt converſation. Ah! ſaid he, thou couldſt not ſee what impreſſion each word thou ſpakeſt, made upon my heart. It was then more than a year ſince I had pronounced the names of father and ſon; I had not ſtrength to pronounce them; there was a weight on my heart; and with thee it gave me ſome conſolation to pronounce and hear them.

Pleaſed to ſee me every day double my activity and diligence, form for him a new garden, and modeſtly inſtruct him in a branch of the culture of the ground in which he was unſkilled, my father had ſometimes the goodneſs to moderate my ardour in my work; and an involuntary inclination held him almoſt conſtantly with me. What age are you, Alexis, aſked he one day.—Twenty-one.—Twenty-one! He ſighed and remained long ſilent.

Ah! ſaid Vauvenargue to Voltaire, he reminds me of Egiſtus; Egiſtus is of the ſame age.

He walked round the garden, replied Alexis, to ſoothe his uneaſineſs, then returned to me and ſaid;

ſaid; don't you think of marrying Alexis? yes, ſir, I have thought of it, ſaid I; and if ſuch is your good pleaſure, and my father's will, I believe I have found a young woman at Fleury who would make me happy. What age is ſhe of? She is ſixteen.—Does ſhe belong to honeſt creditable parents?—She is daughter to a man whoſe blood was ſhed in the ſervice of his country.—A good extraction!—At ſeven years of age, ſhe loſt her mother, as did I.—Poor children! who has brought her up?—M. de Nelcour.—She is no doubt handſome? Although ſhe were leſs ſo, ſhe would ſtill be amiable; ſhe is all ſweetneſs and goodneſs itſelf; M. de Nelcour loves her as if ſhe were his own child.—M. de Nelcour is a charitable beneficent man.—Yes, ſir, an excellent man, as appears from his kindneſs to Natalia and me. He has been guilty of ſome follies, replied my father; but they were the follies of a weak eaſy man, and I can forgive his follies. Alas! he is ſtill too happy, ſince his weakneſs has coſt him only his fortune. It often coſts more. Does he know that you have an affection for Natalia?—He has ſome ſuſpicions of it.—It was perhaps for this reaſon he ſent you from her?—Perhaps ſo.—Why did he not marry you?—Ah! ſir, it was neceſſary to have my father's conſent, and that I dare not yet aſk.—Why?—The fair orphan has hardly any

fortune.

fortune.—She has goodneſs of heart however, good ſenſe and happy natural diſpoſitions; are not theſe worth a fortune?—Yes, ſir; but my father!—Ah! I tremble to ſpeak of him.—Is your father then very ſevere to you?—He has been ſo, ſir; but he has a heart no leſs feeling; and if I might venture to ſay it, he is good like you.—In this caſe, I hope to obtain his conſent to your happineſs. If he refuſe however, I warn you that I have no authority to oppoſe to that of a father; and even you yourſelf, Alexis, muſt obey him.—Yes, ſir, yes, were it to coſt me my life I promiſe you that I ſhall. Never did ſon reſpect and love his father more than I. I confeſs to you, that I find in Natalia all that can be deſired in woman, I love her tenderly, and can never be happy without her. But my father needs only to ſay the word; ſon, you muſt give up the idea of this marriage, follow me, and ſee her no more; I ſhould obey without a murmur. Ah! happy father, exclaimed my parent. Alexis, go to M. de Nelcour to-morrow, and aſk him to do me the honour of coming to ſee me at Flamais, and of bringing the fair orphan with him. I ſhall intercede with thy father for her and you. But give me your promiſe that as long as I live you will not quit me. I am old and alone, and ſtand in need of comfort, more ſo indeed than you would ſuppoſe. You

will at leaſt love me, and I ſhall treat you both as my children.

At theſe affecting words I fell at his feet and wept, and had almoſt diſcovered myſelf. But thought I, if his paſt ſorrows were thus renewed in his mind, he might view Natalia with a leſs favourable eye, or might even refuſe to ſee her!—I was afraid of diſappointing my hopes; and in the ſtate of diſorder in which I was, my father ſaw only the gratitude of a young lover.

Next day, I went with a heart fluttering with joy to viſit M. de Nelcour. You have crowned your favours ſaid I to him, and I come to thank you. M. de Vaneville, that virtuous old man who is ſunk in melancholy, and to whom heaven has deigned conſolation—Adore with me, ſir, the hand which led me hither. M. de Vaneville is my father. Yes, ſir, heaven has employed you to reſtore me to him, and to you I owe the hope of ſoftening his heart. Call Natalia. It remains with her to complete my happineſs, and I would gladly intereſt her in my fortune.

She came, I related what had paſſed between my father and me: and as Natalia by degrees underſtood

ſtood my ſecret, the emotion which ſhe diſcovered, her bluſhes, her innocent and artleſs joy acquainted me likewiſe with hers. She confeſſed that ſhe had thought of me when I was abſent with tears; that ſhe had often wiſhed that ſhe were working in the garden beſide me; that her good angel had foretold to her in a dream that Alexis was to be her huſband; and that ſhe had vowed that if the dream were accompliſhed, we ſhould raiſe an altar to that benevolent angel in an arbour in the garden which we had cultivated together.

We now proceeded all three to Flamais. She appeared before my father in a ſimple ruſtic dreſs; and her graceful modeſty, her ingenuous language, the native beauty of her mind, and the proofs of a cultivated underſtanding which ſhe undeſignedly diſcovered charmed the good old man. Her beauty rendered her ſtill more engaging in his eyes. He expreſſed himſelf highly pleaſed with M. de Nelcour for having ſo carefully conducted her education, detained them three days with him, and during that time continued to be chiefly taken up with our lovely orphan. At laſt, when ſhe was going to return to Fleury; I have determined, ſaid he to me, I will write to your father. You ſhall bear my letter; and if he approve as I preſume that he

will of this marriage, bring him with you. Tell me his name, and the name of Natalia's father.

I then felt all the muſcles in my body ſhake, and all my veins throb. Sir, ſaid I, I tremble at the thought of the confeſſion which I am about to make. The conſent of my father is not all that I have to ſolicit; and ſince you are ſo good I muſt begin with aſking your pardon. My pardon! replied my father with aſtoniſhment, how have you wronged me?—Yes, Sir, I have. You behold before you a guilty but penitent ſon. If my tears can affect you, I muſt have recourſe to theſe: for to deal freely with my generous protector, the early part of my youth has perhaps been a cauſe of cruel uneaſineſs to my father. How? aſked he, with an air of confuſion and heſitation.—By the violence and ſullenneſs of my temper.

While he liſtened, his eyes were fixed on mine; his knees trembled, and his hands ſhook with encreaſing tremor at every word I ſpoke. Ah! cried I at laſt, in the name of nature and of your own blood, ſir, obtain forgiveneſs for a young man who undutifully eloped from his father, and for theſe ſeven years has not dared to appear before him. Having ſaid theſe words, I kneeled. Ah! my poor

ſon,

ſon, is it thou? cried he, throwing himſelf upon me and locking me in his arms. While my ſobbing heart ſeemed as if it would burſt with the unutterable emotions with which it was affected, I felt my face wet with his tears. Ah! theſe are ſweet, ſaid he; let them flow: many bitterer have I wept.—Ah! my father! my father! can you pardon me, the unhappy cauſe of your ſhedding ſo many tears? —Yes, I pardon thee, and all is forgotten ſince thou art reſtored. But ſure, thou wilt not again afflict and diſtreſs my old-age; Who is this young woman whom you are deſirous to marry? Make yourſelf eaſy upon this head, father: Mademoiſelle de Léonval is not unworthy of bearing your name. At theſe words all was cleared up.

Come, ſaid he, to M. de Nelcour; come, let me thank you. Much do I owe you. You reſtore me my ſon; you reſtore him corrected. And you, daughter of a man whoſe blood is dear to me, whoſe memory I honour, come with your huſband and make my old days happy. We were married in the ſame village, and in the ſame cloaths which we had put on when we came to Fleury.

Such was the ſtory of Alexis; and when he had ended, we returned to his father. Cideville, ſaid

the old man, you now know all; give us your advice. My children are happy with me; ſhould I leave them? M. de Nelcour is of opinion that in this retired ſpot, leading in obſcurity an active and peaceful life, bringing up our little ones, enjoying the pleaſures of life at a ſmall expence, and rich enough to afford ourſelves thoſe which are to be found in benificence, we form a little tribe of lovers of the country whom every tongue muſt bleſs.

He was right, cried Voltaire. What he talks of, has always been my favourite chimera; happy will they be who realiſe it. I was of Voltaire's opinion. But he perceiving that Vauvenargue did not ſeem to enter into theſe ideas, again ſaid; in the rage of an epidemical diſtemper, it is one's duty to keep beyond the ſphere of infection. Suppoſe then that this happened in the time of the regency. And in thoſe days, where was there a better place for a worthy man, and a young and innocent woman? Yes, I would have ſaid to the excellent pair, remain where you are; give me robuſt and healthy children; inſpire them with your own love of the beauties of nature and of poetry; let them learn from their father to read Virgil and Horace, and to cultivate their gardens.

Vauvenargue

Vauvenargue ſmiled, and took up the converſation. To ſouls of a ſoft and pliant temper, ſaid he, I would give this advice: for a man of that character might ſoon become vicious through weakneſs, amidſt the vices of the times. Were I to meet with a man of ſtern inflexible probity, and whoſe native goodneſs were as ſteady as that of Alexis; if beſide him I found a young woman habituated from infancy to ſimple modeſt manners, and to innocent pleaſures, I would not injure them ſo far as to hide them from the intercourſe of the world; I ſhould rather preſs them to go and ſhame it into virtue. Meritorious indeed,—to be good among the good! it is in the face of vice, of frontleſs vice, that virtue is truly glorious. Is a life of philoſophic retirement enough to acquit the debt of birth and fortune? Ought a ſon of a man of the law to vegetate among the plants in his garden. M. de Nelcour, indeed, who had waſted his fortune in the world, might with good reaſon remain in the harbour, and rejoice that he had eſcaped from the ſhip-wreck. M. de Vaneville, who had grown grey in diſcharging the functions of an important office, might reſt from his labours. This I allow to be reaſonable. But the ſon was yet young enough to acquire a knowledge of the world, and to make himſelf uſeful, and I would have had him in his turn to pay to ſociety

the tribute of his cares, his talents and his virtues: his lovely companion too ſhould have gone to ſhew her equals that their dignity, their happineſs, their pureſt pleaſures and their trueſt glory, depend upon the faithful diſcharge of their duties.

Such, replied Cideville, were the ſentiments of the good old man and of the young couple.

All in good time, ſaid Voltaire. This is ſtill better, I allow. But if in the world Alexis becomes a libertine, and Natalia a demirep, remember that you, and not I, have to anſwer for it.

No, it is I who anſwer for them, ſaid Cideville; and as they have already lived more than twenty years together, as conſtant and as loving as when they were at Fleury, occupied with the cares of their children's education, and carefully labouring to inſpire them with good diſpoſitions, I believe that I may ſafely quote them as inſtances of virtue, unſpoiled by the intercourſe of the world. Accordingly their father, to whom they pay an annual viſit, in his retirement at Flamais, has raiſed an altar in his garden, to the good angel of Natalia, has placed on it buſts of the huſband and the wife, and

and has inſcribed it with the following lines, which even envy itſelf cannot contradict:

So fair Arethuſa, thy beautiful ſtream,
Flows gentle and pure till it meets the wild wave
Of ocean: ſo lucid the moon's ſilver beam,
While its radiance illumines yon ivy hung cave.

PALEMON,

A Pastoral Tale*.

AFTER having for a long while contemplated in ſolemn ſilence a tomb on which the following words were inſcribed; *I alſo was of Arcadia;* a number of ſhepherds and young ſhepherdeſſes who had been mournfully impreſſed by the ſight of that monument, went away ſad and penſive; the lover beſide his miſtreſs; ſome with downcaſt eyes, others with looks of tenderneſs expreſſing what paſſed in their hearts; ſome taking hands and ſeeming to ſay to one another, ſince death puts an end to all, let us at leaſt love till death.

While

* Which explains two paintings of Pouſſin's.

While their hearts ſtill retained the impreſſion of thoſe melancholy ideas, they advanced out of the grove in which the tomb ſtood, and obſerved in a nook of the valley, a ſolitary farm houſe, at the door of which ſat an old man ſunk in deep melancholy. His body was bowed to the ground; his head was bald, but for a few white hairs very thinly ſcattered over it; and he leaned upon a ſtaff of knotted thorn. They came cloſe up to him, unperceived; nor was it till he heard their voices, that he raiſed his head, and moved his heavy eye-lid. They were ſtruck with his venerable air. An unfortunate monarch could not have appeared with greater majeſty.

The dignity expreſſed in Palemon's countenance was however unequal to the elevation of his mind. A certain dignified turn of thinking attached him to his condition. The management of his flocks had in his eyes all the importance of the toils of empire. Every circumſtance of the paſtoral life aſſumed in his view a degree of grandeur. Alpheus was the king of rivers; the vales which he watered were to this good ſhepherd the whole world in a manner. Pan and Pallas ſeemed to him the greateſt of divinities. The ſhepherds ſeized with a feeling of awful reſpect at the ſight of this old man, ſtopped at ſome diſtance from the cottage before which he

was

was ſeated. One of them however went up to him, and begged him to ſay whoſe tomb it was they had ſeen in the grove. There, replied the old man, are buried all the charms of youth, all that gives delight or ſplendour to life. Beauty, glory, love, love ſucceſsful and happy; there are buried with my only daughter all my hope and all my joy; it is the tomb of Lycoris. Palemon as he ended theſe words gently turned a look of ſorrow towards the grove, and reclined his languid head upon his arm.

Pardon, ſaid the ſhepherd, the indiſcreet curioſity which renews the remembrance of your griefs. It was far from being my intention, O venerable old man, to open afreſh the ſource of your tears. Shepherd, replied Palemon, ſweet are the tears which a father ſheds for his children. What other conſolation could his heart receive, if he did not weep? It is the only pleaſure that attaches me to life. No! Be not afraid of opening up the ſluice from which thoſe tears of tenderneſs are poured. Thanks to the Gods! They flow from a living and inexhauſtible ſtream, and till I breathe my laſt ſigh ſhall continue to flow. While he ſpoke thus, the other ſhepherds and ſhepherdeſſes came ſoftly up. Yes, ſaid he to them, the tomb which you ſee placed in the grove, with the ſolemnity of an altar, is the tomb of

my

my daughter. She was young like you; envious fate has raviſhed her from me. Young Myrtis her lover went before her to the grave. They had not yet been united by the nuptial ties; ſo I did not mingle their aſhes; but he reſts beſide her. Under the ſame ſod reſts alſo Nele the mother of Lycoris. And I am paſſing beſide them the laſt days of my lonely old age, in expectation of the hour when the ſleep of death ſhall likewiſe cloſe my eyes.

Good father, ſaid the ſhepherd, ſince you fondly indulge the bitterneſs of your grief, as the goat of Menalus loves the bitter willow and cytiſus, you will not be diſobliged with us for inviting you to ſpeak of Lycoris; the waters of the rill lingered murmur around the pebble which divides them. Yes, ſaid Palemon, I alſo delight to let my thoughts hover around this tomb. I love to ſpeak of my child; I delight to recollect the fleeting hours of her lovely life. Not a moment of it is loſt from my remembrance. I ſtill ſee her in her cradle and at her mother's breaſt. I ſee her when ſhe uſed to raiſe her little arms over the back of my ſheep, and to play with their lambs; I ſee her when ſhe ſprung up, tall and ſlender as the poplar; I ſee her in all the beauty and luſtre of youth, ſweeter and freſher than the opening roſe. Here a ſigh interrupted his words,

words, and tears guſhed from his eyes. She was my glory no leſs than my happineſs, continued Palemon after a few moments. Hardly had ſhe danced for the firſt time at our ſheep-ſhearing feaſts, when her beauty became ſo famous that a ſtatuary whom the gods had endowed with the talent of moulding clay into a living image, expreſſed her beautiful form in one of his fineſt works; Alcimedon begged my permiſſion to give the features and figure of Lycoris to a ſtatue of Diana. I was perhaps too proud of ſuch honours, and the gods have puniſhed my preſumption. Alcimedon when he had finiſhed his ſtatue, ſaid; this marble ſhall give immortality to that form. (Alas! the marble is inſenſible). I ſhall owe my renown to you added he; receive in return this cedar cup, the laſt maſterpiece I executed. I never imitated aught more happily than this vine with which it is crowned; theſe two goats who are ſpringing up to brouze its foliage are the moſt animated productions of my chiſſel. Alas! you ſhall ſee that this divine man confined not his gratitude to this preſent.

My daughter had reached her eighteenth year, when we were alarmed by an object of affliction and terror. Ten times had a ferocious wolf dyed the graſs of the meadow with the blood of my flocks.

Nele

Nele the reſpectable mother of Lycoris was ſtill alive; ſhe was in great diſtreſs; my ſhepherds were in the utmoſt conſternation; I myſelf was overpowered with anxiety and ſorrow. This voracious animal had iſſued from the foreſt of Lyceum, and had ſpread terror through all the neighbouring paſtures. Lycoris alone amid ſo much conſternation and diſtreſs, retained the tranquillity of mind natural to youth and innocence. Mother ſaid ſhe, be not alarmed. Has not Pan, the god of ſhepherds, hitherto cheriſhed and protected us? Has not my father every year ſacrificed to him the firſtlings of his flocks. Can you ſuppoſe that he will forget ſuch uniform piety. No. It cannot be that he will permit his favourite country of Arcadia to be ravaged; the monſter ſhall ſurely fall by the hand of ſome ſhepherd. Thus ſpoke my daughter, as if by the inſpiration of the God. Ah! ſhepherds, to have ſeen her, one would have ſuppoſed that her looks gained us the ſmiles of fortune. Her voice breathed into every heart a degree of conſolation, ſweeter than the delicious fragrance of the moſt balmy flowers.

Her hopes were not vain. As I was one evening employed in felling an oak for fuel upon the edge of the neighbouring foreſt, the dreadful wolf appeared

ed, bearing in his jaws a ſheep, mangled, yet ſtill bleating. His ſhaggy hair ſtood on end, his throat was bloody, his eyes glared, and as he paſſed with my ſheep, he ſeemed to threaten myſelf. He growled through his foaming teeth. I implore thy aid, O God of ſhepherds and of flocks! cried I; and that inſtant with a ſtroke of my maſſy hatchet, I laid the monſter dead at my feet.

I went immediately home, ſtill pale with terror, but tranſported with joy. Well! ſaid my daughter, this is what I foretold, father. Fortune, you ſee, can like the bee, change bitter into ſweet. It is true, we have loſt a fine ram, twelve of our ſheep, and even the boldeſt and moſt faithful of our dogs. But who is there, father, that enjoys uninterrupted proſperity? Soon again, ſhall our paſtures be covered with playful lambs; our misfortunes ſhall be forgotten; but never ſhall your victory over the cruel enemy from whom you have delivered theſe vales, be forgotten; It ſhall crown you with laſting glory; as long as there are flocks and ſhepherds in Arcadia, the name of Palemon ſhall not die. Such, ſhepherds, were the words of my child; ſuch was her wiſdom at ſo early an age. Her mother and I liſtened with aſtoniſhment, as if it had been a divinity that ſpoke.

You will readily ſuppoſe, continued Palemon, that I neglected not to expreſs my gratitude to the God by whoſe favour I had been ſo highly diſtinguiſhed. All the ſhepherds aſſembled from the banks of the rivers Ophis, Erimanthus, and Alpheus, to honour me as their deliverer. It is not I who have delivered you, ſaid I, but the great God whoſe protection we enjoy: and if you will be perſuaded by me, ſhepherds, let us ſacrifice to the God who watches over us, on the ſpot where the monſter fell. The feſtival was unanimouſly reſolved upon, and appointed to be held on thoſe fine days when the ſun enters the ſign of the twin ſons of Leda.

A more ſolemn feſtival had never been ſeen in Arcadia. Young lime-trees were tranſplanted, to form a double periſtyle round the conſecrated ſpot; their ſpreading boughs adorned with a freſh and delicate verdure, met within, and covered it with a living roof; an altar was raiſed of flowery turf, cut from the bank of the Alpheus; the ſhepherdeſſes, with Lycoris at their head, preſented garlands, in which they had fancifully intermingled all the lively colours of the ſpring; the ſweet muſic played from flutes, hautboys, and thoſe reeds which Pan himſelf invented. The reeds of the nymph Lyrinx never

never ſounded ſweeter, unleſs perhaps when applied to the lips of the God by whom ſhe was beloved; never will God or mortal wind thoſe reeds like him. A thouſand melodious voices ſang in uniſon with the inſtruments; and the air re-echoed the praiſes of the God, the guardian of our paſtures. I dare not mention that my own name was at the ſame time uttered in their ſong; but I was too happy; and all theſe joys ſoon vaniſhed like a dream. At laſt, three ſpotleſs heifers and twenty ſheep, choſen from among all the flocks in the valley, were offered in ſacrifice. Shepherds, can you conceive a nobler ſight? Alas! can you conceive a mortal happier than I?

And my happineſs received a great addition, when in the games that ſucceeded the ſacrifice, I ſaw my daughter, on whom all eyes and all hearts were ready to confer the prize of beauty, obtain, in preference to all her companions, the prize of excellence in the dance and in the race; when I ſaw her, having her brow adorned with a crown of jeſſamine, of myrtles, and of roſes, run to conceal her bluſhes in her mother's arms. Yet this was nothing to the new emotions which ſoon aſſailed my heart.

The prizes of wreſtling and ſinging were reſerved for the ſhepherds. Myrtis carried both. I need not tell you who Myrtis was. His beauty will be remembered in Arcadia as long as Alpheus ſhall continue to run. The nymphs of Menalus and Lyceus lamented his death.

In the art of ſinging eſpecially he excelled all his rivals. When ſtanding before the altar of the God Pan, he celebrated the bounties diffuſed by that beneficent Deity over the country, none of us would have changed his deſtiny for the fortune of monarchs.

In his ſong he ſeemed at firſt as if he had wiſhed to recommend to us the enjoyments of avarice, and deſcribed a ſhip laden with the riches of Corinth proud of its goodly burden and riding with full ſails before a deceitful gale: ſoon however a ſtorm aroſe and it was daſhed againſt a rock and ſwallowed up in the deep. On the ſhore ſtood the avaricious owner of thoſe riches, pale with horror, and viewing the wreck with a look, in which proud hopes had given place to diſmay and the crueleſt deſpair.

He next ſang the exploits and the triumphs of a hero crowned by victory; ſeated on a triumphal car amidſt

amidſt a people who ſympathized with tranſport in his glory; within a few moments the ſame hero was accuſed and condemned by the people who had ſo lately applauded him to end his days in exile or in fetters.

He then deſcribed a king in his palace inveſted with power, and arrayed like the Gods in ſplendor and majeſty. But withdrawing the purple curtains within which the monarch was ſuppoſed to repoſe, he ſhewed us how he was diſtracted by a thouſand anxious cares and fears.

Far happier then, ſaid he, the huſbandman whoſe docile oxen open up the fertile furrows; for even the moſt uncultivated ground is leſs ungrateful than man. But happier ſtill, the wiſe and humble ſhepherd of peaceful Arcadia, who confers all his wiſhes, his hopes, and his deſires, to the poſſeſſion of a thriving flock, a faithful dog, and an amiable ſhepherdeſs, the object of his love; I ſhould add, and who returns his paſſion; but this, continued he, would be too much for a mere mortal, and is perhaps a felicity which the Gods have reſerved to themſelves.

Thus ſang Myrtis; and the God of ſhepherds heard the praiſe of the ſhepherd life, as the moſt reſpectful homage that could be offered him. The victor was crowned with ivy, that ivy which the muſes, the daughters of harmony prefer to gold. To his wreath I added, in reward for his ſong, the precious cup which had been preſented to me by Alcimedon the ſtatuary.

I was greatly ſurpriſed to hear him ſay, as he received it from me; I accept, Palemon, this ineſtimable cup, worthy of the nectar which the young Hebe poured out to the Gods! But, do you keep it for me; let it be ſacred; I will not touch it with my lips, till the young Lycoris deign to drink from it, with me. Then, turning to Nele; Worthy mother of Lycoris, ſaid he, permit me to lay at her feet what is deareſt to me in the world; and taking from his head the ivy-crown, he laid it at the feet of my daughter. That inſtant, the air reſounded with peals of applauſe, and a thouſand voices proclaimed the ſhepherd Myrtis, for the huſband of Lycoris.

Palemon, ſaid he, this, if I can obtain it, will be my trueſt triumph. All voices expreſs the deſire of my heart: may the Gods inſpire you; and may Lycoris obey, without regret, her father's pleaſure!

I embraced the young man. Nele took him by the hand; and my daughter, in modeſt confuſion, went to hide herſelf among her young companions.

You will naturally conceive, that, at this moment Myrtis muſt have been almoſt as dear to me, as a ſon can poſſibly be to his father. Next day, I ſaw him enter the valley driving before him a flock which Apollo himſelf would not have been aſhamed to feed. Twenty heifers and two bulls, in all the beauty and ardour of youth; two hundred ſheep, covered with rich fleeces, white as driven ſnow, with a number of rams among the ſheep, clothed in wool of equal whiteneſs; fifty goats having their udders diſtended with that beverage on which the ſovereign of the Gods was nouriſhed in his infancy—and at their head, their lovers, with brows armed for the combats in which their jealouſy might engage them: theſe were his flocks; and ſix Moloſſian dogs watched around them, and urged them forwards. Alas! Myrtis, to obtain the preference over all the ſhepherds of Arcadia, it was not neceſſary for thee to make this diſplay of thy wealth. My heart, and the heart of my daughter had already engaged her hand to thee.

Palemon,

Palemon, ſaid he, till I ſaw Lycoris, I thought myſelf happy; but, without her, I can be happy no longer. Not all the riches with which the Gods have loaded me, nor the fame with which Arcadia honours my ſongs, ſhall henceforth give me joy, if Lycoris refuſe to ſhare them. Come, my daughter, ſaid I, come, and ſee all the wealth offered you, if you accept him for your huſband, who is deſtined you by a thouſand voices, and propoſed by your father. Wealth! ſaid ſhe, ah! father, all the wealth I deſire, is a huſband favoured by the Gods, choſen by you, and approved by my mother. With theſe advantages, Myrtis, although he were the pooreſt creature on earth, would be to me the firſt of men.

Then, while the flock reſted in my folds, and Lycoris and her mother Nele drew their milk into earthen veſſels; Myrtis and I fixed a day for the marriage. Fatal day! day of horror! marked out for ſuch, it ſhould ſeem, by the hatred of ſome God. It has been ſaid that the ſpiteful jealouſy of the nymphs of Menalus, who were in love with Myrtis, and envied his happy miſtreſs, occaſioned our misfortunes. But, I accuſe not the nymphs: they would not ſurely procure the death of him at whoſe funeral they wept.

The

The day came: our friends; the altar, the ſacrifice, the nuptial bed, all was ready. The ſun had ariſen over our heads in all his ſummer ſplendour: and while he who was to perform the ſacrifice, choſe out the victim, the young lovers, with their companions, roved ſportively through the meads. We, older people, had ſeparated into two companies; one party ſat upon the brink of a pure, unruffled lake in which we had uſed to waſh our flocks; the reſt were at a farther diſtance; and we all delighted to ſee our children enjoy in freedom, the pleaſures of that ſweeteſt period of life.

Myrtis alone had left the dance, and retired to offer his devotions to the nymphs of the neighbouring ſprings. Ye, youthful divinities, ſaid he, whoſe urns diffuſe plenty and fertility through this happy vale. Oh! cheriſh, and protect a ſhepherd who comes to reſide among you. His flute ſhall ſound in concert with the murmuring of your rivulets, and the whiſtling of the wind among your poplars. In his ſongs he will celebrate the freſhneſs and purity of your waters, and will extol your gifts.

Then pulling off his nuptial robe, he plunged into the waters of the lake ſacred to thoſe nymphs. But, when he came out of the water, pure, and bright

bright as the fair leaf of the lily or the daffodil, glittering through the dew of the morn; he happened to tread on an enormous ſerpent which lay concealed under the graſs; it ſprung up, ſeized him, and twiſted itſelf round his body.

The air inſtantly reſounded with a dreadful ſcream. I and my company heard it, when we were ſeated at ſome diſtance, and liſtened in terror. The cry was renewed, and we ſaw a party of ſhepherds, who were nearer the lake, lift up their hands to heaven, and expreſs by their motions, the utmoſt horror and diſmay. Myrtis was in their view, incloſed and nearly ſuffocated in the folds of the ſerpent. Alas! my daughter and her companions heard not his cries; but while the poor youth was ſtruggling to diſengage himſelf from the wreaths of the monſter; Lycoris, gay, happy, and crowned with flowers, was dancing in a diſtant part of the meadow, and animating by her example a train of young lovers who accompanied her. O deceitful proſperity! who can truſt thy careſſes? Who can ſleep ſecure in thy boſom?

I ran up, and with the iron of my crook, cruſhed the head of the ſerpent who had now unfolded himſelf, to make his eſcape. But, I came too late.

The

The unfortunate youth was at his laſt gaſp. He knew my voice, opened his eyes half-cloſed in death, and held out his hand to me. He attempted to ſpeak; and the name of Lycoris died away on his lips. I embraced him. He expired.

Thus the deepeſt mourning ſuddenly ſucceeded to the gayeſt joy. Nele went ſorrowfully to the ſcene of the dance. Shepherds, ſaid ſhe, and you my daughter ceaſe from your ſports. This is no longer a time for merriment. The Gods have thought us too happy. No Lycoris, this is no longer your marriage day, or the marriage day of Myrtis. This fatal day muſt behold the funeral of the youth; for Myrtis is no more.

Myrtis is no more! was repeated with a cry of grief and horror along the vale. My daughter fell down, and remained for a long while pale and ſpeechleſs in her mother's arms. We bore her into my cottage; and when her ſenſes revived, and ſhe again ſaw the light; is it true, father, ſaid ſhe, in a faint, yet piercing voice? He is no more! She aſked us to repeat the circumſtances of his death; ſhe determined to aſſiſt at his funeral, and gloried in her tears, inſtead of concealing them. I weep, ſaid ſhe, for the huſband whom my father choſe for

for me. I was his, I am his ſtill, nor ſhall I ever belong to any but him. I ſhall weep for his fate, till we are joined in the tomb.

Alas! we all young and old wept with her. The death of Myrtis was a calamity to all Arcadia. Your fathers muſt have told you ſo. The nymphs of the grove where Myrtis was born, and the nymphs on the banks of the Lidon, lamented by night the death of Myrtis. All our hills from the grottoes of Pholoe to the cliffy ſummit of Haleſus re-echoed their complaint. Well did he deſerve the lamentations of his country. He was its pattern, its glory, its joy.

But I, unhappy father! how deep was my diſtreſs, when I ſaw my daughter languiſh and fade, like a flower cut by the ſcythe of the morn! She was tenderly fond of her mother and me, and wiſhed to live for our ſakes. Ah! ſaid ſhe, when we embraced her, comfort me if you can, and preſerve my life for yourſelves. To you I owe it; it is my deſire to ſerve and chear your old age, and not to be reunited to Myrtis, till you are no more. But theſe ſweet words were intermingled with the bitterneſs of her grief. Her youth and beauty melted away

away like wax prepared from the juices of flowers, which is consumed by the flame it feeds.

Her mother's heart was broken to see her waste away. Nele died before her. On the last morning of Lycoris's life, Alcimedon the statuary came to see me, Palemon, said he, it is not now for a figure of Diana, but for the mistress of the gentle zephyr, the goddess of spring and of flowers, that I would imitate the features of Lycoris. Ah! cruel that you are! said I, Is it to rend my heart you speak thus? Flora great gods! My daughter! Come, and see her wasted, languishing, and wearing on her lips and all her features, the paleness of death. This, alas! is perhaps the last day the sun shall rise to her. I am just about to bid her a long, long farewel.

That day she expired. Alcimedon affected with my distress, and being the friend and admirer of beauty, wept for the loss of the most perfect model his art had ever imitated; and it was he who in honour to the memory of Lycoris, deigned to erect this tomb.

He would have set up her bust, and engraven the praise of her charms upon the tomb. Oh no! said

I, let nothing proud appear upon the remains of one who was herſelf all modeſty and ſimplicity. The plain marble will be emblematic of the purity of her ſoul, and let it afford a leſſon to our happy youth not to be dazzled with the gay proſpects around them; let it remind them of her whoſe hopes have been ſo cruelly diſappointed, and this at the very moment when fortune, love, marriage, glory, all the benevolent deities who intereſt themſelves in the fate of mankind, appeared to be, with one accord raiſing her to the higheſt pitch of felicity. It will therefore be enough, O divine man, if you only engrave upon the marble, this leſſon to our ſhepherds; *And I alſo lived in Arcadia.* Fame will tell the reſt, and ſhe ſhall never be forgotten.

Such was the ſtory of Palemon. A long pauſe followed. At laſt, Delia, one of thoſe ſhepherdeſſes, after conſulting the eyes of Menalcas; ſaid to Palemon; wiſe old man, ſo much affliction would at leaſt be ſoothed by ſome conſolation, if you had any ſurviving children whoſe affection might prove a ſupport to your old age.—I have none to comfort me, replied Palemon; Fate has left me none. If you pleaſe, ſaid Delia, here are two orphans, a ſhepherd and a ſhepherdeſs, who would be proud and happy, if Palemon would deign to aſſume the

authority

authority of their father, and to adopt them for his children. Can that ſhepherdeſs be yourſelf, ſaid the old ſhepherd? your looks ſeems to diſcover as much. My looks muſt then at the ſame time tell you, ſaid ſhe, who is the ſhepherd.—This young man?—Yes, Menalcas, my lover, who is ſoon to be my huſband. He is not ſo handſome as Myrtis; his Delia is farther from equalling her for whom you weep. But, they would both ſerve you with ſuch tenderneſs, that you ſhould imagine them to be animated by the ſouls of the deceaſed who inhabit this hallowed grove.—Well, then, you Delia, with your Menalcas, come, ſaid Palemon, come to my daughter's tomb, and ſwear, that you will cheriſh her father with the ſame tender care, if it be poſſible, with which ſhe herſelf treated him; And I for my part will promiſe to love you, not indeed as I loved my daughter, but as dearly as I can love any thing but Lycoris.

This adoption was ſolemnly confirmed at the tomb; the ſhepherds and ſhepherdeſſes witneſſed the mutual vows. They left Menalcas and Delia with the old man; and next day returned to aſſiſt at their wedding. No inſolent joy appeared on the occaſion. Love and happineſs were veiled in ſilence. Palemon conducted the pair to the altar; and as he

joined their hands, bathed them with his tears. But, his tears inſenſibly loſt their bitterneſs. A young family roſe around him, and ſometimes diverted his melancholy: and after having been long the happieſt, and long the moſt unhappy of the ſhepherds of Arcadia, he in his old days enjoyed the laſt conſolation that remains to the virtuous man when depreſſed by afflictions which admit of no remedy, the conſolation of doing good, and of looking back with tender regret upon the paſt.

LUCIA AND MELANIA.

A NOVEL.

THE death of Lewis XII. had in ſome ſort changed the ſpirit of the nation. A new reign brings always new manners. Cabals and intrigues diſtinguiſhed the acceſſion of Francis I. to the throne. The ſtate long groaned under the fatal influence of the irreconcilable hatred between the Dutcheſs of Angueleme and the Conſtable of Bourbon. The family of Guiſe were inflamed with no leſs animoſity againſt that of Montmorenci. Theſe quarrels produced general confuſion and diſcontent. That happened

happened which is naturally to be expected from faction and perſonal quarrels. The creatures of both were ſacrificed to the oppoſite intereſts of their chiefs.

The Marquis de Rumiguy, allied to the firſt families of the kingdom, became diſguſted with the Court, and foreſaw the ſtorms which were ariſing. Weary of the fluctuations of court-favour, and having diſcovered the littleneſs and emptineſs of all the objects of ambition; tired of the ſlavery which it impoſed; and above all deſiring to enjoy the charms of nature, truth, and ſolitary reflection,—he retired to one of his ſeats in Picardy. His leiſure hours were there ſpent in the amuſements of hunting and fiſhing, and in the innocent pleaſures of huſbandry. He was ſtudious to contribute to the happineſs of his vaſſals, ſought to attach them to their maſter, and their country, and avoided whatever could have the effect to recall to his mind the inſipid and dangerous life he had formerly led. This philoſophical turn of mind which cannot but appear ſurpriſing in a Courtier who was yet young, did not prevent the Marquis from aſſociating with the beſt company in the province. He had been left a widower, and had two daughters. One of his female relations who lived with him, acted to

them the part of a mother, and directed their education.

There was a marked distinction in their characters, virtues, and charms. Lucia was one of those imperious beauties which subdue rather than affect the heart. Every feature in her aspect and manners discovered a desire for power. She had only one way of pleasing, and knew only how to impose laws. Yet, under a haughty and contemptuous air, she concealed an exalted and feeling soul. Melania, again, attracted, but less compulsively the homage of those who beheld her. She might have been said to be ignorant of her own charms. An amiable gentleness marked all her actions: and this gave her a power, far above the power of beauty. She had numberless charms; while Lucia had only those of personal appearance. The eldest, in a word, seemed to command admiration and love. The youngest insensibly inspired love, while those who felt it, thought it merely esteem.

These sisters lived in harmony and mutual friendship. They confided to one another all the little secrets of their young hearts. They had now attained the age when love first begins to insinuate itself. Their father was desirous of settling the eldest

eldeſt in marriage, and ſeveral gentlemen had already aſpired to her hand, when Count d'Eſtival appeared in the Marquis de Rumiguy's circle.

The Count was one of thoſe few men who have nothing but fortune to complain of. His fortune was very moderate. But this was more than compenſated by the endowments of nature. He was high-born; and his perſonal merit was above all the advantages nobility could confer; with the more ſolid, he poſſeſſed in the happieſt perfection all the more elegant accompliſhments. His wit and good ſenſe were joined with a feeling heart. He made it leſs his object to ſhine than to move. The ſlighteſt expreſſions he uttered were inſinuating and affecting. None could hear him without experiencing an emotion in his favour which time could not remove. Above all he poſſeſſed the happy art of giving the tone to the converſation of the company with whom he mingled, while he ſeemed to receive it from them. Diana of Poictiers, the fineſt woman of the age, who was named by idolatry the goddeſs of the Graces had diſtinguiſhed d'Eſtival among the courtiers about her. A young nobleman ſo diſtinguiſhed might aſpire to the higheſt conqueſt among the fair.

It

It will not appear ſurpriſing that d'Eſtival thus handſome and accompliſhed ſhould make an impreſſion on the hearts of the two ſiſters. A new day ſeemed to break in upon them, and their hearts were agitated with new deſires. Nature yielded to love. They fell both ſecretly in love with the Count; and diſſimulation aroſe with the growing paſſion. Lucia and Melania became now leſs anxious to enjoy each other's company. They had now fewer trifles to communicate to one another. They became both penſive, and muſed much in ſecret.

Melania firſt obſerved that Lucia was no longer the ſame to her; either her attachment to her ſiſter, or perhaps a ſpark of jealouſy affecting her, although ſhe was yet ſcarcely ſenſible of it,—led her to this diſcovery. Her love was confined to her own boſom, and ſhe ſeemed to avoid queſtioning her own heart upon this ſubject. However, ſhe could but own to herſelf that d'Eſtival was amiable: and ſhe began to feel how agreeable it would be to make him ſhare the ſoft anxiety which at ſight of him, always affected her breaſt. She ſought yet dreaded his preſence. Notwithſtanding all the clouds which love and jealouſy raiſed, ſhe was at laſt forced however by her friendſhip for Lucia, to break through that ſilence which ſhe had determined to maintain.

Siſter,

Sister, said Melania, I yield to an impulse which I cannot withstand. I have long felt an inward struggle: my tenderness cannot be repressed.——What have I done, my sister? you no longer see me with the same eye! you reject me! you estrange yourself from me! your secrets are no longer mine! mine you no longer seek to discover! Speak, sister; my dear sister, in the name of friendship, I conjure you, speak; tell me, in what I have injured or disobliged you. Can I have offended you,—I who fear nothing so much as to give you the slightest displeasure?——If I had the misfortune to commit any fault to offend my dear Lucia, I sincerely ask her pardon and will make amends.

Melania dropped some tears upon her sister's hands which she seized and fondly kissed. Lucia, although now wholly occupied with her passion, felt that nature had still its rights. She was confounded at the words and melancholy of Melania.—Sister, you have not offended me. I still love you. But, there are times when the heart is oppressed with melancholy, in an unaccountable manner. Be assured that I shall ever be the same to you. How! continued Melania! Have you griefs the cause of which is unknown to me?——Sister, may I speak? Speak, said Lucia with a sort of curiosity and embarrassment.

barraſſment.—Will you not take ill what I ſay.—I will not, ſpeak freely.—Siſter, I am going to give you the ſtrongeſt proof of my ſincerity and tenderneſs. Conſider that I have your permiſſion. I am perhaps wrong; but I think I obſerved that ſince the Count—What are you going to ſay? interrupted Lucia, bluſhing, and in confuſion?—Nothing, ſiſter—Nothing—but—the Count is amiable——He is amiable. Well! reſumed Lucia with a ſpiteful air which betrayed the ſtate of her heart,—what of that? You don't mean to inſinuate, Miſs——that I am in love? yes, you are in love, continued Melania, looking her ſtedfaſtly in the face——and he loves you, added ſhe, with tears which ſhe ſtrove to hide. And what if I were in love with him, and he with me, returned the eldeſt.—Neither of you would be at all in the wrong, ſaid the youngeſt. The heart——you are going ſiſter! yes, replied Lucia; I cannot ſtay to hear your impertinence. To pretend that I am in love, and in love with the Count! Strange converſation.

She is in love, ſaid Melania, when ſhe found herſelf alone; no doubt of it. Hitherto I ſought to avoid knowing this fatal truth, which, yet, ſo plainly appeared. I now find myſelf the rival of Lucia, of a ſiſter whom I love, and to whom I owe

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the tendereſt affection——Ah! Eſtival, why have I ſeen thee? why haſt thou come to deſtroy the mutual affection of two hearts united ſtill more cloſely by the ties of friendſhip than of blood? Alas this friendſhip was our higheſt happineſs; it was all that we deſired: it afforded the ſweeteſt and moſt innocent pleaſure. It is loſt for ever. Ah! what emotions do I feel.—It is love—but I am not beloved—no, I am not beloved in return.

Melania here burſt into tears. At leaſt, I may indulge in weeping. Ah! how little do you know my heart! I will humble, and ſubdue it. In vain ſhall it ſtrive to ſeduce me from my duty. No, I will not be your rival, my dear Lucia, ſooner will I forfeit my life. I am much to be pitied. I have none to whom I can communicate my diſtreſs. I can ſcarcely diſtinguiſh what is the nature of the ſentiments I feel. And yet I feel but too well what they are. Unhappy Melania! Why ſhould love produce ſuch a change upon our ſentiments? d'Eſtival ſurpriſed Melania a few days after, agitated with the ſame emotions to a degree which ſhe could not conceal. His heart was ſoftened into tenderneſs; he approached her trembling; and his confuſion betrayed him. May I preſume, Madam, ſaid he in a timid heſitating voice, to aſk the cauſe of your uneaſineſs

uneaſineſs? Might I but ſhare it? Sir, replied Melania, with an air of ſeverity, if I had any reaſon to be uneaſy, I ſhould certainly not trouble you with my complaints. Scarcely had ſhe uttered theſe words, when ſhe retired, leaving the Count in great amazement. He could not conceive her reaſons for treating him ſo; and was the more affected by her ſeverity, as his paſſion for her was daily increaſing. Lucia had firſt caught his attention. He had been earneſtly urged by his father to ſeek an alliance which promiſed ſo conſiderable improvement to his fortune. It was natural to ſuppoſe that the Marquis de Rumiguy would be deſirous to ſettle his eldeſt daughter in the world, before her ſiſter. It would therefore have been imprudent in d'Eſtival to aſk the hand of the latter, even although he had been firſt ſtruck with her. He could have no doubt but he muſt in that caſe have met with a refuſal which would have ruined all his hopes of grandeur and fortune. Ambition had at firſt ſteeled his heart againſt love.

The Count had determined to acquaint his father with the ſituation of his heart. He did ſo; but was forbidden to proſecute other views than thoſe which ambition had ſuggeſted. He was now however ready to declare himſelf to the miſtreſs of

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his heart, and to transfer to Melania that homage which he had hitherto paid to Lucia: at this laſt interview his ſentiments would undoubtedly have been declared, if Melania had not ſo abruptly retired. I muſt then, ſaid he to himſelf, ſacrifice my love and happineſs to the ambitious views of my family, and the arbitrary injunctions of a father. Lucia is indeed worthy of my love: but who is equal to Melania? For her I feel all the ardour of true love; and yet muſt I ſmother my paſſion in my breaſt. I may obey my father, and become the huſband of Lucia; but my death muſt ſoon follow a marriage ſo contradictory to the wiſhes of my heart.

Melania was in the mean time no leſs uneaſy. She blamed herſelf for rudeneſs to the Count. At ſome moments, her weakneſs prevailed ſo far, that ſhe could have wiſhed d'Eſtival to have aſked the cauſe of her uneaſineſs, a ſecond time. Curioſity alone might have been his motive. The Count, ſhe ſuppoſed, could have no other reaſon to be intereſted in any thing which concerned her. Perhaps, ſaid ſhe, I may be odious to him. Undoubtedly, he is very little intereſted about me. Thus, nearly, did Melania reaſon with herſelf. At other times ſhe blamed herſelf, with greater ſeverity, for indulging any ſentiments of tenderneſs towards the

object of her hopeleſs love. She would have been diſpleaſed with him, had he ventured to diſcover his paſſion by any looks or expreſſions in which it might have appeared. She ſought, yet avoided his company; was afraid of ſeeing him, yet would often ſteal a tender glance at him. It was as if ſhe had been animated by two ſouls of diſcordant ſentiments, who tyrannized over each other by turns. At laſt, while her heart was divided between her ſiſter and her lover, and ſhe was vainly ſtruggling to repreſs a violent paſſion, ſhe fell dangerouſly ill.

Lucia immediately felt all her tenderneſs revived. She haſtened to the ſick-bed of Melania, preſſed her in her arms, and wept over her. What is the matter with my dear Melania? ſaid ſhe earneſtly. I would now read what is paſſing in her heart. For theſe ſeveral days you have appeared melancholy. The cauſe I cannot divine. Tell me frankly; we are alone: it is your dear Lucia, your tender ſiſter, your beſt friend, who ſues for your confidence. Ah! ſiſter, ſaid Melania, uttering a deep ſigh, and viewing Lucia, with a look of mingled tenderneſs and ſorrow,—leave me to die, my ſiſter. —No; dear Melania, you ſhall not die: my life is bound up in yours: ſpeak plainly: your ſituation affects me.——You take an intereſt in my fate, then?

then? Can you doubt it? you are unhappy, tell me why? my dear Melania! your griefs ſhall be mine. —Would you, ſiſter, have me to confide my anxieties to you? you cannot remove them.——Why ſhould you deſpair?—Your friendſhip will be offended.——It cannot. Yet, once more, my dear Melania, I intreat you, open your heart to me.—— Siſter! ſiſter! is it to you I ſhould open my heart? ——Who will ſooner relieve, or conſole you than your ſiſter?——Do you ſtill inſiſt?——By all our paſt tenderneſs, I conjure you.——Well! cried Melania, taking her arm, ſince you inſiſt upon it, the ſecret of this heart ſhall be revealed. Know that I love, I adore—Whom, interrupted Lucia, with a quivering voice; whom?—D'Eſtival, whom you love, and who, no doubt, loves you——What ſay you?—I will not, ſiſter, ſtand in the way of a mutual inclination which my reaſon approves. I aſk only one favour: I repeat the requeſt. Let me die; and let my weakneſs remain unknown to all beſide yourſelf. It is abſolutely criminal in me, and that in the higheſt degree, to have ſo wounded and racked your heart. Conceal from d'Eſtival the ſource of my ills, and of your own; our honour is concerned. Forgive me, dear Lucia? You have a heart: You muſt be ſenſible, that my fault is involuntary: I am puniſhed! I ſhall ſoon breathe my

laſt ſighs in the boſom of my ſiſter. Live you, to love the Count, and be beloved by him—You love d'Eſtival, ſiſter, replied Lucia, and ſhed a torrent of tears.—She immediately withdrew herſelf from the arms of the agitated Melania, but inſtantly claſped her beloved ſiſter again to her breaſt. You, ſiſter, it is you muſt live, ſaid Lucia. Since the wiſhes of our hearts interfere, I will ſacrifice my love; I will not marry the Count.——No, too generous ſiſter, ſaid Melania, I will not abuſe your goodneſs, or rather your pity; I ſhould be cruel and barbarous were I to do ſo. To you is d'Eſtival deſtined; you muſt receive his hand.....and.... it is for me to die—My God! how is it with you? Your brow is pale as death.

Melania fainted. Lucia was carried to her room ſenſeleſs. Soon as ſhe recovered, generoſity prevailed in her heart over love, and ſhe returned eagerly to her ſiſter.—Pardon my weakneſs, ſiſter; my courage is now confirmed; I can anſwer for myſelf. Yes, I ſhould, no doubt, think myſelf happy to be the wife of Count——Melania, I love him: I can no longer deny it. Every thing concurs to reveal my unhappy paſſion. But, how could I be happy, if the accompliſhment of my wiſhes were to prove the cauſe of your death. Yes, I feel that the

the force of my friendſhip is at leaſt equal to that of my love. Dear ſiſter, look not on my tears: liſten not to my ſighs: think not of the tortures my heart may feel: but live to be beloved by your ſiſter, and friend.—Ah! ſiſter, the more you are diſpoſed to ſacrifice your happineſs to mine, ſo much the more muſt it become me to arm my heart againſt your kindneſs, and againſt myſelf. So much virtue and generoſity in you can ſerve only to render me odious in my own eyes. Yes, I conjure you, Let me end the life which I can no longer endure; and live you to lament me, and to cheriſh my memory, —to marry—Melania could add no more, and her rival here fell weeping into her arms.

Lucia would not leave her ſiſter, who perſiſted ſtill in diſplaying the ſame delicacy and greatneſs of ſoul. Can human weakneſs make a nobler or more ſevere effort than it requires to repreſs ſo pleaſing a paſſion as love in a young and tender heart, and to deſire the happineſs of onother perſon at the expence of one's own? Is not this the height of heroiſm?

Siſter, ſaid Lucia to Melania, ſome time after this painful confeſſion, I have examined and tried my own heart. It has ſtrength, I think, to bear the law I mean to impoſe upon it. To promiſe more

would be, to deceive you, and to abuſe myſelf. Dear Melania, I feel, or at leaſt venture to think, that, to promote your happineſs, I can give up d'Eſtival—not marry him—but I can hardly ſay—not love him;——Yes, I ſhall ſtill adore him in ſecret,——but, to ſee him in the arms of another, although ſhe be my ſiſter——no, this ſight I cannot bear. Has Melania the courage to make this ſacrifice? And here ſhe looked on her with tenderneſs. Do you doubt it? replied Melania. Yes, continued ſhe, I can. Be you his wife; be you happy, and make him ſo; this is a ſolemn engagement which I contract with my own heart, and it ſhall be fulfilled. Let me alone be unhappy; but let my ſiſter enjoy that felicity which her virtues ſo well merit.

Thus did theſe two young women exerciſe the moſt ſingular and exalted generoſity. Melania was affected with Lucia's behaviour, and revived. She had not indeed obtained a deciſive victory, yet ſhe ſeemed to have triumphed, and this was in the eyes both of Lucia and herſelf enough to leave her no cauſe of ſelf-reproach.

Yet her paſſion inſtead of being diminiſhed, acquired every day new ſtrength. She avoided d'Eſtival, but her lover's image was impreſſed upon her heart,

heart, and ſtill effaced all her generous reſolutions. She was anxiouſly careful to avoid all opportunities of being alone with the man whom ſhe adored, but whom it was her duty to view with indifference. Yet notwithſtanding all her care, the Count at laſt found the opportunity of which he was ſo much afraid.

Why will you go, Madam? ſaid he meeting her as ſhe attempted to avoid him, and throwing himſelf at her feet. Deign to hear me but for one moment—No, you ſhall not leave me; I can no longer conceal my ſentiments; I love you to diſtraction; I live, I breathe for you alone. I have been perſuaded by my father to offer my addreſſes to your ſiſter; ſhe is amiable and reſpectable; I allow ſhe is deſerving of eſteem and love; my family would have wiſhed to ſee me united with her; and to ſeek the connection was enjoined me indeed as a law. But lovely Melania, I can conſtrain my feelings no longer. Every day I diſcover new virtues and new charms. To pretend love to Lucia would be baſe, ſince my heart is engaged by another object; it is for you only I feel a tenderneſs which is hourly increaſing in my breaſt, and which I muſt continue to feel till I breathe my laſt ſigh. Speak, divine Melania, decide my fate. Every

thing

thing is already decided, ſir, replied Melania, and bade him riſe; you have offered your hand to my ſiſter; your attentions have affected her heart; even honour commands you to love her. Only Lucia can now with propriety become your wife. All that I owe you, or can give is friendſhip. Remember that I am my ſiſter's friend; and you yourſelf Sir—I have ſaid all that I have to ſay. Let this ſubject be no more mentioned between us. I for my part ſhall conceal what you have now communicated on the condition of your maintaining henceforth a profound ſilence with regard to it; and—adieu, Sir; I muſt in future avoid your company. D'Eſtival would have anſwered; but before he could recollect himſelf Melania was ſhut up in her own apartment.

She then felt her love revive in all its force, ſhe exclaimed; here my tears may flow without reſtraint, and I may indulge all my weakneſs, love and ſorrow! Here I cannot offend Lucia. What have I heard? The Count in love with me! I adore him! And yet muſt I tear his image from my heart! I muſt ſpeak to him of my ſiſter's tenderneſs, and repreſs all the emotions which I myſelf feel; I muſt treat him with the coldneſs of friendſhip, and ſo indifferent a friendſhip. Ah! wretched Melania!

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how burdenſome is life! let me die but not without ſhewing that a woman can vanquiſh herſelf and can ſacrifice her love to the feelings of nature, friendſhip, and exalted generoſity. Yes, Lucia, I will die for thee. He ſhall be thine; thou wilt pity my ills and the horror of my ſituation.

Melania thus ſtrove againſt her own feelings, and watched to repreſs even the fainteſt emotions of love which aroſe in her heart. D'Eſtival ſent her ſeveral letters, but ſhe returned them all unopened. Weary of theſe continued attacks upon her reſolution, more in love with the Count than ever, and at the ſame time more than ever attached to her ſiſter, ſhe at length ſummoned up all her courage, and ſecretly retired from her father's houſe. Her elopement occaſioned the greateſt diſtreſs to her friends. Lucia was inconſolable. After ſome time, ſhe received the following letter.

"My flight needs not ſurpriſe you, ſiſter. Every thing warns me to avoid you, and to forſake the world. May heaven enable me to conquer my own feelings! I have taken the only ſtep proper in my ſituation. I can, at this diſtance ſpeak to you with freedom.—It would be wrong, longer to deceive you, or myſelf. I love you; I adore d'Eſtival; I cannot,

cannot, but you muſt be his wife. I have choſen the only huſband whom I may freely love. I conſecrate myſelf to God, and name him as the object of my affections. Ah! how can I? while my heart ſtill owns other ties. How ſhall I break through ties which I at once cheriſh and deteſt? But, he will read the emotions in my ſoul; he will take pity upon me and reſtore me that tranquillity which I have loſt.———Our hearts are the work of his hands; he will ſurely change mine, and check this unhappy paſſion which I bear in my boſom even to the foot of his altar; which even while I write, torments me more than ever, and adds to my guiltineſs before him. Perhaps God will conſole me for the loſs of the moſt amiable of men! For ſurely d'Eſtival is the moſt amiable. His image is impreſſed on my heart, and deſtroys my peace. What have I ſaid? Dear ſiſter, be happy, and love me. The Count himſelf may be my friend. I may, without offending you, or wounding your delicacy, promote his happineſs, ſince your's and his muſt be the ſame. I give you both my bleſſing, and my fortune; it will place you in a condition becoming your birth and rank. I flatter myſelf, that my father will not refuſe to comply with my intentions. Enquire not after the place of my retreat: you cannot diſcover it. I have changed my name and concealed

cealed my rank. I have indeed uſed every means to ſecure myſelf from the ſolicitations of your tenderneſs,—from my father whom I muſt ever regard with grateful affection,—and above all, to guard againſt the returning weakneſs of my own heart. I ſhall at leaſt die with the ſatisfaction of having fulfilled my duty, and contributed to your happineſs. Farewel, ſiſter! farewel, world! farewel ye deluſive paſſions! farewel, for ever—I dare not name, I muſt forget him, and henceforth think only of the grave; then ſhall all my ills, my weakneſſes, my wanderings have an end—my love——Ah! Siſter, while I write, my eyes ſwim in tears; I die a thouſand deaths; this is the laſt letter you will ever receive from me."

The generoſity of Melania had a moſt piercing, rending effect on Lucia's heart. The idea, that ſhe had occaſioned laſting miſery to her ſiſter, was too much for her to bear, ſhe fainted; and as ſhe revived, cried aloud with grief and deſpair.—No, dear Melania, I will not yield in fortitude to you! I will not form that connexion which it is my duty to hate and reject, ſince it would make you unhappy. Your flight and concealment ſhall be vain. I ſhall diſcover you, you ſhall return, ſee d'Eſtival,

love

love him, and, if it muſt be ſo, become his wife. It is for me to die.

The Count here preſented himſelf——Sit down Sir; I have ſomewhat to ſay to you.—I have flattered myſelf, Sir, that I have made ſome impreſſion on your heart. But, I ſhould, doubtleſs offend you, I ſhould fail in what I owe to nature, to honour, to myſelf,—if I concealed from you the unhappineſs of my preſent ſituation. You are not ignorant of my affection for my ſiſter. She regards me with equal tenderneſs. Yes, ſhe truly loves me—My ſiſter, Sir, ſaid Lucia weeping, has buried herſelf in a convent which we cannot diſcover. She has bequeathed her fortune to me; all her concern is about my welfare: ſhe inſiſts upon my giving my hand to you. Nor is this all: know, Count, Melania loves you. This confeſſion can do her no diſhonour. She ſacrifices her own happineſs to mine, and indifferent to her own ſatisfaction, ſeeks only her ſiſter's. I leave you to judge of the diſtreſs of my ſituation. My heart is pierced through with ſorrow. I ſhould think myſelf happy in being your wife, d'Eſtival, and to contribute to your felicity. But my ſiſter—good God! my ſiſter!

Adorable,

Adorable, heavenly ſouls! cried the Count; Melania loves me; my higheſt happineſs only conſummates my miſery. Never will I purchaſe my joys at the expence of the mutual tenderneſs of two hearts formed to merit the pureſt homage. Rather will I die of ſorrow than poſſeſs you at ſuch a price——Melania for ever unhappy! and I the cauſe of her miſery! And is it impoſſible to find out the receſs to which ſhe has withdrawn, and to perſuade her to return!

Both d'Eſtival and the Marquis de Rumiguy were at all imaginable pains to diſcover the fair fugitive. Their enquiries however were unſucceſsful. The Marquis in the depth of his diſtreſs acquainted the Count's father with his unhappy ſituation, and urged him to come and conclude the marriage of Lucia with d'Eſtival. He hoped,—ſuch was the purport of his letter, that the eſtabliſhment of the only daughter who now remained to him, might afford him ſome conſolation in his diſtreſs. The Count's fortune was indeed narrow, but his birth was highly honourable, and he might aſpire to the moſt conſiderable employments in the ſtate. His father therefore accepted the Marquis's invitation. On his arrival, he found his ſon oppreſſed with a gloomy melancholy; his heart being agitated with

a paſſion which proved the more afflictive, becauſe duty, probity, and even pity enjoined him to conceal it. He could not indeed avow what he felt without being guilty of exceſſive cruelty. Lucia knew not how dear Melania was to her lover. To her thoſe tears which were prompted by the moſt ardent love, ſeemed only expreſſions of humanity and compaſſion. The Count had however reſolved to undeceive Lucia, and to inform her that ſhe had a rival, when his father appeared.

This old nobleman was one of thoſe veteran military characters who ſuppoſe it as eaſy to ſtruggle againſt the paſſions as to combat the enemies of the ſtate. He had forgotten what love was; or if he recollected the idea of it at all, it was only to regard it as one of the fooliſh and fanciful illuſions to which youth is ſubject. Honour alone inflamed his heart. In his letter he had given his word to the Marquis of Rumiguy for the marriage of his ſon with Lucia. He looked to nothing therefore but his promiſe, and aſpired only to ſee it fulfilled. In vain did his ſon explain to him the ſituation of his wounded heart, and the diſtreſs of Melania. Son, replied the old man, it is enough that you have acquainted me with your weakneſs; I have no doubt of Melania's power over you, I ſee it too well; I lament

ment her deſtiny and yours; I cannot avoid pitying your diſtreſs; but beware that none but your father ſee your tears flow; ſuffer not your weakneſs to betray itſelf. You muſt marry Lucia, fulfil my engagement, ſatisfy my honour, conſole the Marquis, in a word, make it your buſineſs to promote the happineſs of your family, whoſe elevation depends upon this marriage; you muſt obey me, and at my command go to the altar; let me not ſee you again till you are ſon-in-law to the Marquis de Rumiguy.—But my father——I have heard too much.—Love——Love! What is love compared to honour? My promiſe is ſacred: you ſhall marry Lucia, or—you are not my ſon.—My father, ſhould you diſtreſs me? Ah! I am your ſon; I feel it by the reſpect and the tenderneſs with which my heart regards you. At leaſt give me time to reconcile my heart to the dreadful ſacrifice you require.—Delays, no delays—d'Eſtival thou wilt be the cauſe of my death; once more I command thee, obey, yield to the neceſſity which requires thee to fulfil my promiſe, thine, and thy duty—My ſon, thou ſeeſt my tears, wouldſt thou occaſion thy father's death?—Ah! my father, I will obey you. Melania in the mean time, in her melancholy place of retreat was perhaps on that very account only the more expoſed to the ſtorm which ſhe had fled to avoid. She

had expected at leaſt to find ſome ſemblance of tranquillity. Alas! love purſued her even to the foot of the altar. She embraced it with paſſion and watered it with ſtreams of tears. D'Eſtival was all that ſhe ſaw and loved, the only object of her heart. In vain did ſhe cry to God, offering up her tears and her deſpair. O God! forſake me not; let thy ſeverity be diſcharged upon me; arm thyſelf with every puniſhment thy wrath can inflict againſt an unfortunate wretch who has betrayed and ſacrificed thee to her criminal paſſions. At ſome moments I feel myſelf ready to quit this retirement, and to fly to where d'Eſtival dwells, and to ſpeak to him of my love—To die at his feet. Where is my virtue, whoſe heavenly aſſiſtance I implore? O my God, my God, forgive?——No, my ſiſter, I will not diſturb your happineſs. Love d'Eſtival. Be beloved by him. May you ſoon be united in the bonds of an happy union. I know what bonds are reſerved for me. I am prepared to ſubmit to this heavy yoke—O my God! I commit myſelf to thy care, and retire to communion with thee, far from the world, and from myſelf! Thou, image of him from whom I flee, purſue me not, interfere not to divide me from heaven. Ah! d'Eſtival, let me at leaſt die virtuous!

Lucia

Lucia was in the time in a ſituation not leſs diſtreſsful. Sometimes ſhe would think tenderly of Melania, and accuſe herſelf of having wronged her; at other times ſhe baniſhed from her thoughts all remembrance of her rival: at times ſhe would regard the tenderneſs which prevailed in her own heart with a degree of terror: ſhe could not conceal from herſelf the idea of her ſiſter dying the victim of love and ſiſterly affection: ſhe wept for her; but nature is leſs powerful in the heart than love! Lucia adored the Count, and marriage with him became ſoon the only object of her wiſhes.

The day was at laſt fixed. The young pair were conducted by their parents to the church. The Count's father talked to him of the advantages of ſuch an eſtabliſhment, and of the joy it would give to all his family. What advantages? replied d'Eſtival, in a faint voice. It is your deſire, my father, and this is enough! I go to certain death!—Has Lucia, my ſon, no charms or virtues to endear her to you?—Lucia has all that is adorable: but—— ſhe is not Melania, added he, with a deep ſigh. No matter! you ſhall receive a proof of my reſpect for your commands, and of my diſpoſition to return your paternal tenderneſs. I obey, and advance to the altar, to give my hand as you require. This

marriage is your work: I ſacrifice myſelf for you. Only, after making this ſacrifice, allow me to ſpend the few days I may ſurvive, in the indulgence of my grief.

D'Eſtival as he ſpoke theſe laſt words, reached the foot of the altar, where he was to join himſelf to another than Melania. Lucia, in ſimilar agitation, pronounced the marriage vow as if it had been a ſentence of death. She was however now united to the man whom ſhe loved; and was left alone with her huſband. Affected with the ſad reflection that her happineſs was purchaſed at the expence of her ſiſter's liberty, and perhaps of her life, ſhe felt herſelf unhappy in her new ſituation. Sorrow and remorſe poiſoned her enjoyments. D'Eſtival was equally oppreſſed with the ſame diſtreſsful ſentiments. At times ſhe could have wiſhed to have been leſs affected with the remembrance of Melania's misfortunes.—Yet in all her preſent uneaſineſs, Lucia was far from foreſeeing the terrible ſtroke which threatened her, ſhe knew not that her huſband's love had been all beſtowed upon her ſiſter.

The news of the marriage of d'Eſtival with Lucia reached Melania in the place to which ſhe had retired.

tired. It is not for language to expreſs the emotions by which ſhe was agitated. On this trying occaſion, all her virtue was neceſſary to ſupport her reſolution. She ran to the altars in all the bitterneſs of grief, and found ſome relief in prayers and tears.—It is done then, ſaid ſhe; the miſery of my fate is finally decided. The Count is now my ſiſter's huſband: he is my brother! I muſt for ever renounce and forget him! Ah! can I? Ah! cruel d'Eſtival, oughteſt thou to have formed ſuch an engagement? Barbarous ſiſter, ſhouldeſt thou thus have taken advantage of my tenderneſs and generoſity? What have I ſaid, unhappy creature that I am? Whither does a fatal paſſion miſlead me? Lucia, d'Eſtival, forgive me, forgive this laſt weakneſs? The unfortunate Melania will ſoon be no more; you ſhall know the ſpot where her aſhes are laid; you will come to water it with your tears; even my cold remains ſhall be ſenſible to your pity. My God! my God! can there be a ſeverer trial?

This lovely victim was thus toſſed by a confuſed ſucceſſion of the moſt violent paſſions. Rage, hatred, revenge, all the fires, and all the poiſons of jealouſy racked her heart; her love was ſtill as ſhe laboured to repreſs and extinguiſh it, kindled up again with new ardour.—Let me leave this ſad retreat, ſaid ſhe,

ſhe to herſelf, where I ſuffer every moment, all the pains of death. Let me at leaſt die at the Count's feet. He ſhall witneſs my grief and tenderneſs. But her reſolutions varied with the varying paſſions by which her boſom was torn. At laſt ſhe conceived the dark intent of delivering herſelf by a violent hand from the miſeries of life. She choſe a ſpecies of death the moſt horrible; and the fatal cord was already in her hand.

Here, ſaid ſhe, I have the only means to free myſelf from the diſtreſsful influence of an unhappy paſſion, which was at firſt indeed but a weakneſs, although it has now become a crime. Even heaven has declared againſt me. Alas! I have with tears, ſighs, and bitter exclamations implored its mercy; but, all in vain. My prayers are not heard, ſtill I burn with all the fervours of love. What can relieve me from ſo heavy a burden?—Death only —Death! and what is there in this word to terrify me? Is not death the period of our exiſtence? Death brings repoſe from all the troubles of life; and what is life under ſuch tortures? My ſiſter! my friend, added ſhe, with a mournful accent,—ſhe knew my heart, all my ſenſibility, my deep deſpair. Ought ſhe to have married d'Eſtival, when I adored him, yet ſacrificed my own paſſion to her's?—

She

She is his wife, then? Come! let me put an end to a life of misery and horror.—Yet, what am I going to do?—To take away my own life? But is this life in my own power? I find myself shut up in a gloomy dungeon. But, may I leave it? Who has shut me up here? A master who is not obliged to render me an account of his conduct! the God of Nature!—with whom alone it remains to decide concerning my fate. It is undoubtedly his good pleasure, that my tears should flow, my bosom should be torn, and I should expire in torments.

She now fell on her knees, weeping bitterly.—O my God! I obey thine incomprehensible decrees! I will live, in all the bitterness of grief and despair; mine existence shall be only a protracted death. I have offended thee by offering to hasten the fatal hour to which all human beings are destined. Alas! my life shall atone for the guilty thought. The emotions with which thou leavest my heart to be tortured, will more than punish my crime.

Lucia, in the mean time, with all the ardour of her love, could not avoid trembling with horror even in her husband's arms. Her sister's image still haunted her. The Count, by every kind attention which a husband could pay, endeavoured to make amends

amends to his wife for the want of that tenderneſs which he felt it not in his power to ſhew. He pitied and eſteemed her; but loved her only as the ſiſter of Melania. Whenever his wife happened to pronounce this loved name, his careſſes were more ardent, and he ſhewed greater ſenſibility.—How could a woman remain, in theſe circumſtances, ſo long blind?

D'Eſtival, in reſpectful ſubmiſſion to his father, and in regard to what duty and integrity required of him, ſatisfied himſelf with mourning in ſecret. But, the wretched eſpecially, cannot without great diſtreſs, confine their ſorrows to their own boſoms. Our tears loſe their bitterneſs when intermingled with thoſe of a ſympathizing friend; they then even change their nature and become in ſome degree pleaſing; the compaſſionate looks of pity gives all the enjoyment that misfortune can know. The Count had an intimate friend in Paris, to whom he had hitherto confided all his ſecrets. With the intention of relieving the diſtreſs of his heart, by laying open his griefs, he had begun a letter to that friend, in the following words; "Yes, my friend, I am married; I am rich; I may hope to be yet richer, and may aſpire to the firſt employments in the ſtate. Yet, I am the moſt unfortunate of men.

My

My wife poſſeſſes every quality that can render woman lovely; beauty, grace, noble birth, talents and virtues. But, can one command one's heart?—— My wife has a rival——." Here he had ſtopped.

Lucia, unfortunately happened to enter her huſband's cloſet, found this letter where he had forgotten it, read it, and at the laſt line ſank down in a ſwoon. In this unhappy ſituation d'Eſtival found her. He ſoon perceived the cauſe. The letter lay at her feet. She opened at length her languid eyes —I am not beloved!—Ah! Count, I throw myſelf before you, I embrace your knees, and water them with my tears.—Ah! cruel that you are! I have a rival, a rival whom you prefer! and who is my rival? who is ſhe, ſay? The Count, confounded and aſtoniſhed firſt endeavoured to raiſe his wife.—No, I will not riſe till you tell me who ſhe is. What barbarous wretch has dared to rob me of your heart? me, who adore you, ungrateful as you are? let her come to pierce and rend my boſom.—A rival! O heavens! Can it be? I die——And is ſo fatal a ſtroke reſerved for me?——I am not miſtaken then—It is but too ſure—Melania—my ſiſter.—

At this name, the Count fell down before his wife. —you loved my ſiſter!——I ſee it——I ſee it——

hide

hide it not from me——dare to avow it——dare—yet once more, ſpeak——I conjure you—ſpeak.—Yes, replied d'Eſtival, with a half ſtiffled voice; this is what I wiſhed to hide from you and from myſelf; yes, this is my awful deſtiny! I am ſenſible of all your worth, your beauty, and your noble qualities; you merit all the homage that can be paid to the moſt eſtimable and adorable of women—but—ſay on—ſay on.—My heart had given Melania the preference before I was honoured with your hand. I had intended and ought to have buried this fatal paſſion in laſting ſilence; unhappily you have diſcovered my ſecret; pity me; may I hope that I ſhall have at leaſt your pity?—The paleneſs of death is on your brow, my dear Lucia! See your huſband dying at your feet: he will repreſs thoſe ſentiments which offend you: he will love you.———Lucia could only ſay, as ſhe lifted her languid eye upon d'Eſtival, you love my ſiſter; and then ſunk back into another ſwoon.

She was immediately attacked by an ardent fever which alarmed all about her for her life; but ſhe obſtinately concealed the cauſe of her diſtreſs; ſhe had not ſtrength to ſpeak to her huſband; ſhe could only lock his hand in her's with tenderneſs, and view him with looks of love and ſorrow which pierced

pierced and agonized his heart. Ah! this is too much generosity! said d'Estival. Incomparable woman! and am I thy murderer! and dost thou still refuse to reveal my crime to the Marquis, and to my father? Let them be informed of it; let them publish it; and let all the world accuse and condemn me!

The Marquis de Rumiguy and the Count's father were attended by a physician.———Sir, said he, and you, my father, it is vain to hope that art shall discover the cause of the Countess's illness: you see the author of it.—How! I myself have destroyed her peace, and in a manner plunged a dagger in her breast. Let me acquaint you with my ills, continued he, weeping, I am the most unfortunate of men, I loved her sister, before our marriage; I strove to hide my feelings; they have been discovered by Lucia; and I am thus the occasion of her death! No, my dear Lucia, you shall not die, but live to be adored and loved by your husband. Promise to forgive and love me.

The Marquis, and the Count's father wept with him; and then embraced and sought to console the desponding Lucia. They tried every means to cure the gloomy jealousy which wasted her life. Her

ſiſter had choſen a religious retirement, and there was every reaſon to believe that ſhe would not appear again in the world: What hopes might not Lucia then conceive? Her beauty, her virtue, her conſtancy could not but gain her the empire of her huſband's heart which Melania diſputed with her. Time, and the delicate propriety of her conduct would recall the affections of d'Eſtival.—Ah! cried the unhappy Lucia, vain remedies theſe! Here, continued ſhe, laying her hand on her heart, here is the ſeat of my diſeaſe; it is too deep rooted to be ever cured. No, I cannot live; I wept for my ſiſter's fate; fool that I was! I knew not that ſhe for whom I wept, was a rival much dearer than I to the object of my love. It is vain for me to flatter myſelf; the Count will not change; love is not to be reſiſted, as I feel too well! Did I conſult my reaſon, it might perhaps recall me to life; it is my tenderneſs which drags me down to the grave..... All is over.

It is impoſſible to expreſs the various agonizing emotions by which the dying Lucia was agitated: ſhe reproached Melania as if ſhe had been preſent with her: then aſked her to forgive her tranſports of jealouſy, vowed eternal friendſhip, and again broke out with reproaches: ſhe would call on her huſband

huſband to come to her arms, and then reject him with horror; invite him to love, and inſtantly conjure him to forget her. All theſe various ſcenes of ſorrow ſtill ended in profuſe weeping, and in fainting fits.

Neither the cares, the intreaties, the careſſes, nor the deep affliction of the Count, of his father, and of the Marquis, could reſtore Lucia's health or peace. All the aid of medicine proved fruitleſs; the diſtempers of the ſoul are more incurable than thoſe of the body.

The Counteſs ſaw death approach, without terror. In her laſt moments ſhe diſplayed the moſt ſignal proofs of love and generoſity. I am dying, ſaid ſhe to her own father, and the father of the Count, who ſat by her bed, and ſtrove to hide their tears; hide not theſe proofs of your ſenſibility; I am pleaſed to think that I am ſtill dear to you; theſe are the laſt tears your unfortunate daughter ſhall occaſion you to ſhed. My father, love your daughter; deign ſometimes to remember her with pity; be comforted for my loſs; you have yet another daughter. Melania herſelf will pity and forgive me; ſhe knows what love is; I die in the hope of her forgiveneſs. My father, permit me to give the Count one ſmall

mark of my ill-fated tenderneſs. The Marquis preſſed her to his heart, and could only articulate her name. To you, Count, then, continued ſhe, I bequeath all the fortune I have to diſpoſe of.—Why mention you fortune, my dear Lucia? you are concerned for my happineſs! and, can your wretched huſband be happy, think you, if he ſhall loſe you?—In you he loſes all, all.—No, Count—Melania.—Ah! ſay not thus, my eſtimable wife, the ſublimity of your virtue reſtores my heart to you; and you alone, adorable Lucia, ſhall henceforth be queen of my ſoul. Ah! what paſſion would not yield to ſentiments ſo lawful, ſo pure, ſo ardent?——My dear huſband, interrupted Lucia, holding to d'Eſtival one of her hands, which he preſſed in his, and covered with his kiſſes and tears, my dear huſband, thoſe are the happieſt moments of my life! I am fully ſenſible of all the value of ſo generous an effort! but——I know what love is—my ſiſter will ſtill be dear to you.

The Count attempted to ſpeak, but ſhe continued; Forgive me; I yet live, and love you——but my cruel jealouſy ſtill prevails in my heart; but I muſt, I will repreſs it. It is but little to aſk you to accept my fortune, with my father's conſent; ſtrive to find out the place of my ſiſter's retirement, and

marry

marry her, marry my rival. I hate her not. Live to be happy, and eſteem me; ſince I could not win your tenderneſs; drop at leaſt a few tears over my aſhes; this is the only return I require for my love —my love which coſts me my life; Farewel, father. Then addreſſing the Count's father; farewel, Sir, ſaid ſhe, you who have ſhewn me ſo much kindneſs. It is all over! the bonds which united us are broken —Come hither, dear d'Eſtival; you weep!——— Melania will wipe away your tears.

Theſe were the laſt words Lucia ſpoke. Her jealouſy ſeeming to terminate only with her life. The Marquis confirmed the donation ſhe had made to her huſband.

D'Eſtival ſank in a deep melancholy; deep it muſt indeed have been, for at times he even forgot Melania: his eyes and his whole ſoul were fixed on the coffin of his wife; her dying image ſeemed ſtill to ſtand before him; he accuſed himſelf of inhumanity; he called himſelf aloud the murderer of Lucia; even the Marquis was touched at the ſtate in which he ſaw him. The unfortunate father, while he wept for Lucia, hoped that Melania might one day be reſtored to the world, and might yet be a conſolation to his old age.

A report was however ſpread, that Melania had followed her ſiſter to the tomb. Accordingly, the unfortunate father ſoon after ſunk into a languiſhing illneſs, and died in the Count's arms, calling him, his dear ſon, and appointing him his heir.

D'Eſtival, overpowered by ſo many ſevere ſhocks, was ready to follow the Marquis to the tomb. His love had revived in all its former ardour at the fatal news of Melania's death. He wept for his wife and his miſtreſs. He could hardly diſtinguiſh himſelf, the nature of the afflictive emotions which he felt. His father waited conſtantly upon him, and was from time to time preſſing him to his breaſt.

A nun whom friendſhip had attached to Melania informed her of the deplorable death of her ſiſter, without omitting any of thoſe circumſtances which rendered that event ſo melancholy and affecting. Melania, in a word, came to learn that Lucia's laſt ſighs had been ſhared between her and d'Eſtival, and that ſhe generouſly urged her huſband to give his hand to her rival when ſhe herſelf ſhould be no more. Such an effort of exalted virtue was ſufficient to overcome the feelings of an unfortunate woman who inceſſantly reproached herſelf for the cruel fate of her ſiſter.

Melania

Melania ſunk into a lethargic illneſs in which ſhe remained for ſome days, without uttering a word, or dropping a tear. At laſt, her deſpair burſt forth, and tears and ſighs ſtifled her voice.—No, unhappy Lucia, no, I will not yield to you in generoſity. I, I alone, am the author of your death——and let me alſo revenge you. I would live, to think of your virtue and tenderneſs which I have betrayed, —to have my heart wrung with ſorrow, and tortured by remorſe. This I owe to a generous ſiſter, whom I have hurried to the grave. Ah! canſt thou ſee my tears? my ſorrow cannot recall thee back to life. I would die an hundred times, only to reſtore thee one day's life. Thou ſhalt yet ſee how much I ſhall ſuffer for thy ſake; thou ſhalt ſee how dear thou art to me——I will leave this place and go to die upon thy tomb; that I may be buried beſide thee! that my heart may be united with thine! thou art no more, my dear Lucia! I know the weakneſs of my own heart: I will prove that thy ſiſter was not unworthy of thee; Lucia— I will do more than die.

She now caſt herſelf on her knees,———My God! forſake me not: I ſtand in need of thy aid, of the conſolation and ſupport of heaven. O my protector, my only friend, have pity on an unfortunate

tunate creature who ſeeks refuge in thy boſom, and with confidence demands of thee a new heart to fulfill her duties.

Melania pronounced theſe laſt words in a firm tone, expreſſive of invincible reſolution. The news of her father's death reached her while ſhe was in this mournful ſituation, and loaded her with a new weight of affliction. When Melania had firſt heard of the death of Lucia, it was feared by thoſe about her, that ſhe would follow her faſt to the grave: for three days, ſhe had even been looked upon, as dead. This was no doubt, an unhappy miſtake, and the news of it had reached the Marquis de Rumiguy. The condition of the Count was no leſs diſtreſſing. His father had now laid aſide all his former harſhneſs; he was now ſoftened into ſenſibility, and wept over his dying ſon with all the diſconſolate grief of a fond parent.

A ſervant came haſtily in:—She is not dead, ſir ——Melania! d'Eſtival could only pronounce the name, and then threw himſelf in his father's arms. She is ſtill alive, continued the ſervant, and the place of her retirement has even been diſcovered. We are ready to conduct you thither. My friend —my father, I will ſee Melania, I will tell her.—

Come,

Come, my father, let me fall at her feet; I ſtill love and adore her. The father deſirous to detain his ſon, intreated him to defer the execution of his purpoſe for a few days,—at leaſt for one day,—even for an hour. But the Count's impatience could not be reſtrained. He ſet out inſtantly in a carriage, and was accompanied by his father.

D'Eſtival thus ceaſed to weep over the tomb of the unfortunate Lucia. Intoxicated with gay hopes, he again recovered life and ſpirits. He thought of nothing but the altar before which he might unite himſelf irrevocably with Melania. His ſoul had flown to the feet of her who was miſtreſs of his fate. He talked in his heart to her, and fondly repeated with himſelf the moſt ardent vows of love and tenderneſs, heightened by abſence and misfortune.

D'Eſtival complained impatiently of the ſlow motion of the carriage. Had he been borne on winged ſteeds, he would yet have complained of their tardy progreſs. At laſt he reached the convent. He aſked to ſee Melania. She ſent to beg him and his father rather to return within three days. What an age of torment, this interval to d'Eſtival! what was to be thought of ſo cruel an order? Could Melania

lania have forgotten him? Would she love no more, now when he flew to her feet, and desired so ardently to confirm and sanctify his love by the most solemn obligations. He renewed his entreaties, shed tears, and represented, that he could not live for such an age of suspence. They still persisted however in giving him the same answer.

At the end of the three days, he hastened with his father to the grate. Melania appeared, Good God! cried the Count, what means this habit?—That my mode of life is no longer in my own power, answered Melania. What is it you tell us? eagerly returned both the father and the son, at the same instant?——I yesterday took the vows.—The vows! was all that the Count could reply; he then fell into his father's arms, who stood motionless through astonishment.—Yes, it is done, continued Melania, with the same firmness as at first: I have irrevocably devoted myself to God!—and can have no other husband.—Your vows! exclaimed d'Estival. I was informed, continued she, of the premature death of my sister, and of my father. I I have done my duty; I have devoted myself at the altar to a life of piety and retirement. I at last learned, Sir,—ah! what reproaches do I not deserve from myself?——I learned, that I only had occasioned

occaſioned my ſiſter's death——and for her ſake I have buried myſelf for ever in this ſecluſion from the enjoyments of the world.——You are then for ever raviſhed from me!——How could I, Sir, have taken the name of your wife, after occaſioning the death of my unfortunate ſiſter. It was my deſire to avoid ſeeing you, till I ſhould have ſet an eternal and unſurmountable barrier between us. ——D'Eſtival, judge of the ſtruggles and torture I have experienced. I loved you. I bluſh to ſpeak it, ſince my heart can no longer be either your's or my own. I aſk only your friendſhip, or rather your compaſſion. Let us weep together for poor Lucia. Alas! it is our duty to weep for her. I with pleaſure confirm the bequeſt of our fortune, made you by her and our father. Lament our fate. Think ſometimes of two unfortunate young women who have died for love of you; for I ſhall not long ſurvive my dear Lucia, and my poor father. Farewel, Sir, farewel, d'Eſtival——We muſt ſee each other no more.

What! cried the Count, weeping,—can Melania command me to ſee her no more?——Let us not wring each other's hearts with ſorrow——Let us part——Your preſence renders me criminal in my own eyes, and in the ſight of God to whom alone I now

I now belong; he puniſhes me, and I adore his juſtice! Yes it is I who have plunged a dagger in the boſom of the hapleſs Lucia; I feel all the horror of my crime—Yet once again, allow me to ſay, we muſt ſee each other no more, and—farewel for ever. Ah cruel Melania! replied d'Eſtival; you think only of the loſs of your ſiſter; my death you make no mention of. Think you that I can for even an hour ſurvive this fatal interview? Do you delight to rend my heart who have hitherto lived for you? Yet look once again upon me—Behold your victim expiring—It is you my dear Melania, you alone, who drag me down to the grave!——I have hurried my ſiſter thither; I ſee her pale, lifeleſs form laid in the coffin—her groans, and reproaches aſſail me even in this ſad receſs where I can know no peace. What would you propoſe, d'Eſtival? that while ſhe is hardly cold in the clay, I ſhould receive the hand of her huſband! that I ſhould become your wife! Begone, compel me not to hate you, I cannot help viewing myſelf with horror.

She was retiring, when the Count took her by the arm.—Sir, ſaid Melania to the Count's father, I beg your help againſt him, and againſt myſelf. D'Eſtival, then, continued ſhe, looking on him with

with weeping eyes, have I not too far betrayed my duty already? Its voice forbids me to ſee you, to hear you, to think of you d'Eſtival; if you love me, if I am yet dear to you———Ah! wretched creature! what have I ſaid? Leave me to die in innocence. No, you know not all the torments you have occaſioned to me; you ſhall not know them. They are terrible: death alone can end them. The Count caſt himſelf at her feet:—Behold your lover. —My lover! what do I hear! Oh heavens! Lucia! O my God!——Begone, flee, I ſay, for ever: forget me, forget me——Ah! this is too great indulgence of my weakneſs! Adieu, d'Eſtival!—adieu, Sir———ſoon ſhall you both mourn my death.

She now ſprung haſtily from the parlour, evidently tearing herſelf away with a painful effort.—Melania, yet one word more; do, but hear me; Melania, one moment longer, cried the Count. But, Melania was gone for ever from their ſight. D'Eſtival loſt the uſe of his ſenſes, and his father, with difficulty bore him to their carriage.

The unfortunate Melania had ſtrength of mind to quit all that ſhe held dear. For, it was eaſily ſeen that the emotions of love were the moſt painful ſhe felt. She had left the Count; but ſhe could

not help looking fondly after him, and ſtill ſpeaking to him with her eyes. Her looks were fixed as long as he remained within ſight, on that amiable man whom ſhe could have loved, could have married, had it not been for the inflexible power of virtue which oppoſed the riſing ſentiments of tenderneſs in her heart. This ſtern virtue which ſo cruelly oppoſed her happineſs would perhaps have forſaken her if ſhe had continued to gaze longer on d'Eſtival. What a ſight for a tender miſtreſs? and none could be fonder or more miſerable than Melania. The Count was dying; ſhe would ſee him no more; ſhe herſelf hurried him to the grave; one word from her would have reſtored him to life and joy. The ſight affected and overpowered her feelings. What greater ſacrifice could a ſiſter require, whoſe complaints and reproaches ſeemed ſtill to ſound in her ears?———

At laſt, when d'Eſtival was in the carriage, and it was gone out of ſight. Melania fell to the ground, where ſhe lay ſome moments in a ſwoon, and then aroſe, and looked around for the Count, recalled his beloved image to her heart, and again ſunk to the ground, ſhedding a flood of tears.——— I ſhall ſee him no more then! I ſhall ſee him no more! It is I myſelf who have pronounced this cruel

cruel ſentence! I who ſtill burn with the ardour of deſire! Art thou ſatisfied, O heaven? Lucia, have I been ſufficiently barbarous and inexorable? My heart has ſubmitted to a decree of the full rigour of which, it was previouſly ſenſible. I might have been united with d'Eſtival; yet have I chained myſelf to theſe altars, and ſhall die before them—— No, I ſhall not die! this fatal paſſion, the cauſe of all my diſtreſs, is nouriſhed by my tears, and keeps me alive, to prolong my miſery. My condition is ſo dreadful, that death is the greateſt bleſſing I dare hope for; yet death, although ſo earneſtly deſired, comes not to deliver me from a life of inſupportable miſery! In vain do I call upon it! In vain do I long to be laid in the ſilent grave. The hated light of day ſtill returns to viſit theſe ſad eyes, and renews my errors and my crimes. Ah! poor d'Eſtival! why ſhould honour and religion forbid me to ſee and love you? The moſt tranſient thought of ſo dear an object is criminal——Great God! canſt thou pardon me? O God! O God! pity my miſery, my weakneſs, my remorſe——Wretched creature that I am! Muſt love for ever torment a heart which may no longer indulge it?

Melania in vain called virtue and pity to arm her againſt a diſtraction of ſoul which was from time to

time awaked by the bitter remembrance of the paſt. D'Eſtival ſhe could not forget. She felt herſelf tempted to draw his picture from the impreſſion of him which remained on her heart. She took up the pencil, threw it down again, blaming her own weakneſs, and after leaving her work many times unfiniſhed, retiring to proſtrate herſelf before the altars, and returning again to this monument of the predominance of her paſſion, finiſhed it amidſt a violent ſtruggle between religion and love, ſighs, groans, and tears. Yes, cried Melania, theſe are the features of the deareſt of mortals, the moſt faithful of lovers!—Ah! what have I ſaid? Being Supreme, pardon, pardon. Alas! can I have offended thee by ſuffering my tears to flow over an unſubſtantial ſhadow? Can ſo ſlender a conſolation be denied me?——Am I guilty? Can I doubt it, O my God? My guilt, my infidelity riſes up againſt me; I cannot blind myſelf! My thoughts are all ſo many acts of perjury; let me ſpeak this terrible truth to my own heart; it feels but too much delight in the guilty indulgence; it lingers fondly over every circumſtance connected with the idea of——I feel this but too forcibly! it occupies, it fills my whole ſoul. No, I will not keep this fatal picture before my eyes; I will not preſerve it to nouriſh a guilty tenderneſs——which it is my duty to extinguiſh

guiſh—I muſt repreſs it; I muſt remove the object from my ſight, deſtroy it, baniſh the idea, if poſſible, altogether from my heart.

This virtuous reſolution ſhe prepared to execute. Her hand trembled. Yet once more, however, ſhe caſt her eyes upon that dangerous portrait, ſighed, put it in her boſom, bound it round her neck. Each day ſhe vowed to God to deſtroy that teſtimony of ſentiments which ſhe condemned; yet almoſt every moment, turned her eyes again upon the picture, watered it with her tears, and addreſſed to it her lamentations and complaints.

The Count recovered not from the illneſs into which he was thrown by his laſt diſappointment. The remonſtrances, careſſes, and tears of his father could not recall him to the enjoyments of life. He ſunk into a deep melancholy, and would receive no conſolation to his grief. But, how ſhould he have been conſoled. His very grief was dear to him, and he delighted to inflame and encourage it. The pains of love have a charm with them which no hearts can conceive but ſuch as know the fond emotions of love. No, cried d'Eſtival, no, my father, talk not to me of healing up the wound of which I die! May it rather be deepened, and let it remove

me from a weary life! I find a ſort of ſatisfaction in ſaying to myſelf in ſecret, I die for Melania! and this is the only pleaſure I can now taſte——— My father, would you have me to live, ſince I cannot poſſeſs Melania. When I breathe my laſt ſigh, her image will ſtill fill my heart! Cruel that ſhe is! She is the author of all my ills; yet cannot I help kiſſing the hand which plunges a dagger in my heart!—But, think you, my father, that ſhe may not yet melt into tenderneſs? Can her denial be irrevocably fixed? Cannot thoſe vows which are to me a death warrant, be broken through? Is her engagement ſo irrevocable? Are the ties which ſhe has taken upon herſelf ſo indiſſolubly binding? Are there no examples to juſtify her quitting the veil?—Have not inſtances been known?——Ah! wretch! how fooliſhly I talk! what ravings do I utter?—I have loſt Melania for ever!—My father! might I not, however ſee her! obtain me this favour; if ſhe refuſe to ſpeak to me, yet may not my eyes once more gaze upon her's? Let her ſee my tears! Let me breathe my laſt ſigh at her feet!

D'Eſtival's father haſtened to the convent. He could not however gain admiſſion to Melania. His tears and intreaties were all in vain. He ſolicited but a moment's interview; yet was that moment refuſed.

refuſed. Melania ſtill more and more diſtreſſed, went, all in tears, to caſt herſelf at the feet of a reſpectable clergyman, and intreated him to aſſiſt and teach her to repreſs the tumult of paſſion in her agitated breaſt; unfolding to him the ſituation of her heart, declaring that ſhe felt her reſolution ready to give way, and was inclined to admit the Count's father, and himſelf again into her preſence, and beſeeching on her knees, that he would ſtrengthen her weakneſs by communicating whatever conſolations and encouragements religion could afford. The compaſſionate man wept to hear the ſtory of her ſtories, encouraged her to ſteady perſeverance in the path of duty, and forbade her to yield to her partiality to d'Eſtival, or even to agree to an interview with his father.

Melania again triumphed over herſelf. But her victory was only a ſeeming one. The ſacrifice coſt her too dear, not to be followed by miſery more terrible than death. From that inſtant her life was paſſed in a diſtreſs of a deeper and more awful nature than what ſhe had yet felt. Her tears were dried up; ſhe uttered no more complaints; only half-ſtifled groans, and accents of dark deſpair would ſometimes burſt from her, notwithſtanding the reſtraint ſhe impoſed on herſelf.

Of all the paſſions, love is that which retains its force longeſt. Solitude ſerves only to irritate it. In ſilence and retirement are the ſtrongeſt and moſt afflictive emotions rouſed in feeling hearts. The recollection of the cloiſter, when the ſacred enthuſiaſm of religion does not prevail in the breaſt, rouſes all the native ſenſibility of the ſoul, and often produces extraordinary convulſions of paſſion which terminate in death. When we are withdrawn from the buſtle of life, imagination there awakes to array in more pleaſing and more ſeductive colours, any object of our affections, of which we have been bereaved. We paint the dear ideas on which we delight to dwell, in lovelier forms, and thus take a pleaſure in exaggerating the value of what we have loſt.

Such nearly was the ſtate in which Melania found herſelf. Her grief was, of itſelf, perhaps the ſole conſolation of which her heart was at this time ſuſceptible.

A caſket was at length brought her which contained a letter and a ſilver box. She eagerly took the letter, perceived it to be in the Count's handwriting, and read, as follows,

"I have

"I have obeyed you. I have ſacrificed to you my happineſs and my life. I could not ſee you again and I could not live without you. Read this letter. Before you receive it, I ſhall be no more. Could I ceaſe to love you? Could this ſentiment in which my whole ſoul was abſorbed,—could it be effaced from my breaſt? Heaven cannot, ſurely, be offended with my love. There can be none purer, or worthier of the ſupreme author of nature who created us for each other. I cannot be your's; and yet I can never belong to any other. I have tried all means to conquer a paſſion which obſtacles only irritate. But, ah! what is ambition, or what can reaſon do, compared with love? One look from you had far more power over my heart. The firſt moment I ſaw you, determined the fate of my remaining life; I was thenceforth deſtined to be the moſt unfortunate of men. But, it was not enough that I ſhould ſuffer ſo many torments, ſhould burn in vain with the ardour of love, ſhould be forced by cruel duty into the arms of another, and obliged to hide my tears, and confine my deſpair to my own boſom;—no, all this was not enough for my puniſhment. I have been the occaſion of the misfortunes of your family. I have occaſioned the death of your ſiſter and my wife. I have alſo hurried your father to the grave. My hand too has impoſed the grievous

grievous yoke to which you yourſelf are ſubjected. I—I have ſacrificed you all three. You have but too ſeverely puniſhed me! I have only one remaining reſource, and on it I joyfully lay hold.

One favour I yet expect from you. Preſerve the only preſent you can now with propriety receive from me, and the laſt my tenderneſs can offer. Adieu, my dear Melania. Are you offended with this expreſſion? Think that I die without the name of your huſband,"

D'ESTIVAL.

Melania confounded by this new ſtroke of affliction, remained for ſome time motionleſs, and at laſt laid her hands upon the box. By an emotion in ſome meaſure involuntary, ſhe was prompted to open it. The following note was what firſt met her eyes. "Here is the heart which adored you, and never ſighed unleſs for you alone. Can Melania, inflexible as ſhe is, refuſe it ſome tears?"

The heart of d'Eſtival! cried Melania. And this indeed was the mournful preſent. She became ſpeechleſs, as ſhe viewed it. She was laid on a bed where ſhe died within a few days. Her laſt words were, O d'Eſtival! O my God.

THE

THE HERMITS OF MURCIA.

I Once enjoyed the friendſhip of a Swediſh nobleman who was endowed with ſo exquiſite an organization of the finer parts of the animal frame, and poſſeſſed ſuch delicate ſenſibility to all the beauties of art and nature, that whenever he gave his friends an account of the impreſſions he had received, his narrative always glowed with the ardent ſentiments and vivid imagery of a poem. Moral beauty diſplayed in the life and manners of men, gave him the higheſt delight. But, even when he was in the greateſt degree charmed, his emotions were ſoft and tranquil, like that gentle play of the feelings which is excited by the viſions of an agreeable dream. He ſeemed then under the influence of enchantment. His ſoul was tranſported, but his ſenſes were calm; only his words expreſſed the intoxication of fancy which he felt: but, in his language even, hyperbole aſſumed an air of natural ſimplicity. It was difficult to conceive that ſo exalted a ſoul ſhould remain ſo unalterably calm,—or to believe that an agitation of mind accompanied with ſo much ſeeming coolneſs, could be really felt. I, for my own part, although accuſtomed to ſee him always

ways the ſame, could not avoid being ſurprized at ſo ſingular a temper. But, I remarked, thoſe burſts of ſenſibility, thoſe expreſſions undeſignedly ſublime, which were natural to him when he was affected with emotions of pleaſure, never occurred to him when he ſpoke of any objects of uneaſineſs which he had experienced. His grief was deep, cloſe, and ſilent. It is the nature of melancholy to expreſs its joys with a mingled ſoftneſs and ardour, while it conceals its griefs; and melancholy was the predominant feature in his character.

The Count de Creutz had been ambaſſador from the Court of Sweden to that of Madrid, and during his reſidence in Spain, had viſited its fineſt provinces upon the coaſts of the two ſeas. In his letters, he ſpoke of it as a country of romantic ſcenery; but, when I ſaw him in Paris, he deſcribed it more particularly, and with higher enthuſiaſm, I was pleaſed to find his imagination embelliſh the ſcenes which were pictured on his memory; but could not forbear aſking him, how it came, if thoſe were not fairy landſcapes which he drew, that men did not throng from all quarters to fix their abode in ſuch happy ſeats? Ah! ſaid he, men take root, like vegetables, each in the ſpot where he is born.

As

As I was one day rallying him on the fabulous and poetic air of his deſcriptions of Granada and Murcia. What would you think then, ſaid he, if I ſhould tell you what happened to me, there? you would call it a romance; yet is it in every particular a certain fact. I inſiſted on him, as you may naturally ſuppoſe, to relate the adventure to which he alluded; and he refuſed not to gratify my curioſity.

I travelled leiſurely, ſaid he, over the confines of thoſe fine provinces, not knowing whether I was more attracted by the charms of what I was advancing to ſurvey, or fondly detained by the beauties of that which I was leaving. In a village, named Molina, not far from Carthagena, I heard of a wild man who had, for nine years, lived a ſolitary life upon one of thoſe hills which are ſkirted by the vale through which the Segura meanders. That recluſe, ſaid they, is ſtill a young man. His aſpect is gloomy and melancholy. His beard and hair nearly hide the features of his face; But, what of theſe is to be ſeen, with a certain dignity apparent in his form and geſtures, indicate him to have been in a ſtation above the lower ranks of life. None but a peaſant of the neighbouring village is admitted to intercourſe with him. This man receives the aro-

matic plants which he gathers, and ſells them for him in Carthagena. Upon the product of this ſmall traffic does our hermit ſubſiſt: cultivating, beſides, a garden, which is ſaid to contain a curious variety of plants.

In my youth, continued my Swediſh friend, I made natural hiſtory my particular ſtudy, I have always found the book of nature, to be the moſt intereſting I ever read. My maſter in Botany was our celebrated Linnæus. His leſſons were ſtill freſh in my memory, and I yet retained that fondneſs which I had caught from him, for this faſcinating ſcience. Hence I became curious to ſee the ſolitary ſage who drew from it means of ſubſiſtence. Under pretext therefore of a wiſh to purchaſe ſome plants, I ſet out on an excurſion to the top of the mountain on which he lived. When I arrived within ſight of his cottage, I ſent away my guide, leſt the approach of two ſtrangers might too much alarm him.

His hut ſtood between two eminences on the ſummit of the hill, and the garden occupied the ſpace between them. There was the hermit at work, when I approached. He expreſſed ſurpriſe at ſeeing me; and with a grave, yet courteous air aſked the

the purpoſe of my viſit. I am a ſtranger, anſwered I, travelling through this country for amuſement, I am fond of botany, and am gathering a collection of the aromatic plants in theſe regions. I was informed, that you purſue the ſtudy of botany as a man of ſcience, and at the ſame time gather plants for ſale. I beg, that you will give me the preference as to what you have at preſent, on hand. Sage hermit, added I, perhaps the illuſtrious man who inſtructed me in the ſcience you love, may not be unknown to you. I am the diſciple of Linnæus.

O wonder of ſcience! from one end of the world to the other, fame has gained this man admirers and friends. His name alone procures kindneſs and honour to his diſciples. His ſchool is ſpread as wide as the communication of his diſcoveries. The reſpect he inſpires, approaches in its nature to adoration.

Happy man, ſaid the hermit, you were then born in the ſame climate with the true Solomon of the North; you have ſeen and heard him; If you ſhall ever again meet with this oracle of nature, tell him, that on the oppoſite ſhore of the continent, he is heard and revered; tell him that on thoſe hills where the Moors long reigned, upon the confines

of Granada and Murcia, you have met with a man ſecluded from the world, who reads his writings with a degree of delight which he receives from no other object.

This language aſtoniſhed me, in my turn. I accompanied the botaniſt in a walk through his garden, which was truely a ſtore-houſe of all the treaſures of the vegetable kingdom. We then went out and botanized together upon the mountain. He ſeemed to conſider me as ſkilled in the ſcience, and even conſulted me more than once with a degree of deference to my judgment. After a pretty long ramble, he invited me into his cottage.

It conſiſted of a wall of turf, encircled with a thriving hedge, the over-arching boughs of which formed the roof. The furniture was a table and two ſtools rudely framed, a mattraſs for a bed, ſome of the more neceſſary utenſils, ſuch as a ſaw and a hatchet: in a corner ſtood a ſword, and by the wall hung a dagger with a belt of three colours. On a ſmall deſk lay the volumes of his *hortus ſiccus*, with ſeveral other books, among which were the works of Linnæus, whom he called his comforter. The word *comforter* threw to me a ray of light upon his preſent

preſent ſituation: for he who needs a comforter, muſt have ſome griefs to comfort.

I ventured to aſk whether he were happy in this life of auſterity and ſolitude? Happy! no, ſaid he, but as little unhappy as one in my condition can well be. I wiſhed to know if it was out of any diſguſt with the world, he had reſolved to live in ſolitude. No, ſaid he to me, men have been neither unkind nor unjuſt. I have no right to hate them; and then he launched out into an eulogium of his country, which was at once true, noble, and affecting. I imagined then that he might have had ſome quarrel with the holy office, and hinted alſo this conjecture to him. No, ſaid he, my religious ſentiments, are pure and fixed. Of ſuperſtitions which I do not practiſe or believe, I never ſpeak. I have never had any buſineſs with the inquiſition.

As there was in the gravity of his manners, a mingled air of gentleneſs and melancholy, by which I felt myſelf every moment, more and more attached to him, I begged him to forgive the anxious curioſity which the ſight of his ſituation prompted in me; and could not help betraying ſome uneaſineſs leſt in his preſent retired way of life, he might ſoon be at a loſs for neceſſaries. He aſſured me

that his own induſtry, with the ſervices of an inhabitant of the neighbouring village procured him abundance of plain, wholeſome food, and afforded even a ſufficient ſupply for all his other wants. I am no friend to luxurious eaſe, ſaid I; but the life you lead, ſeems to me, I muſt confeſs, exceſſively auſtere. That mat is your bed, and that ſtone your pillow! Would God, replied he, that no painful reflections ever aroſe in my breaſt, to diſturb my reſt on this bed! It were then ſoft enough. You have ſuffered ſome ſevere misfortunes, ſurely? added I. Yes, ſaid he, very ſevere, and I have been, myſelf the only cauſe of all that has befallen me. If it be any loſs of property, or ill ſucceſs in buſineſs that you have to complain of, conſider that you are yet young, and at your age, a misfortune of this nature may be eaſily retrieved; If, by my credit I could, in any means contribute—Here he interrupted me, and drawing from beneath the deſk on which his books lay, a box full of dates, figs, and dried grapes, and beſide theſe an urn of water; ſtranger, ſaid he, the man, who can live upon little, counts not the injuries of fortune among the evils of life. Ah! my brother diſciple, ſaid I, embracing him, do you not however eſteem the pains of love among thoſe evils?

At

At theſe words, his countenance reſumed the air of gravity which it had worn when he firſt accoſted me. The converſation was interrupted by a momentary pauſe of ſilence; after which he opened his herbal, and deſired me to chuſe out what ſuited me. I felt with pain that I had indiſcreetly touched the ſore which rankled in his heart. However, I did as if I had not perceived the abruptneſs with which he waved my queſtion; but looked over his *hortus ſiccus* in which the plants were arranged in the method of Linnæus; and thus gave him time to recover himſelf.

After we had for ſome time amuſed ourſelves in examining together the fruits of his ſtudies; Yes, ſaid I, the ſage of Upſal ſhall, in a ſhort time know, that he has a worthy and faithful diſciple among theſe hills. Theſe newly diſcovered treaſures of your's ſhall be preſented to him. But, being ambaſſador from the Court of Stockholm to that of Madrid, I have ſtill two years to ſpend in Spain: and Linnæus would not forgive me, for having ſeen you but once. I purpoſe, before leaving Carthagena and Murcia, to make another excurſion through this neighbourhood. I ſhall then make ſome ſtay in Molina, at the foot of theſe mountains. Permit me to return then and receive new information from

from you, with an additional of the plants peculiar to this climate.

My cottage is open, replied the recluſe, to the diſciple of Linnæus. But, he muſt remember that in this cottage I wiſh to live and die a ſtranger to the world. He muſt ſwear, that not a living ſoul ſhall hear him mention me, while he remains in Spain. I engaged to keep his ſecret: and after ſome hours farther converſation, we parted, with the ſame uneaſineſs at bidding each other adieu, and the ſame deſire to meet again, as if we had ſpent our lives together, in friendſhip.

My chaiſe was waiting at the foot of the hill. I continued, after entering it, to muſe on what I had juſt ſeen and heard. When I reached the village, my head was full of a variety of thoughts prompted by curioſity, and ending in numberleſs conjectures, none of which however appeared ſatisfactory. I concluded however, that my new friend had been unfortunate in love, and was ſtill haunted in his cottage, by painful recollection. But, with what intentions, or on account of what circumſtances, had he reduced himſelf to the rigid life of a hermit? His piety was of no auſtere character, and his religion, he ſaid himſelf, had nothing ſuperſtitious

in

in it. At his age (for he ſeemed not above thirty years) the firſt inclination of a ſoul that has received any cruel wound, is, to retire to ſolitude. But to continue in ſolitude with calm, determinate reſolution; and after nine years to remain thus ſequeſtered from the world, without diſguſt, impatience, or regret, and to perſiſt in a determination to live and die at a diſtance from men whom he hated not, and forgotten by a country of which he ſpoke with the higheſt praiſe! This appeared ſomewhat unnatural: I ſought for the cauſe, but could not imagine what it might be.

Two days after, I went to ſee him again. I gently attempted to revive in his heart the ſocial inſtinct with which we are endowed by nature, and reminded him of the mutual neceſſity of living together to which men are ſubject. Regard not, ſaid I, as vain indiſcreet curioſity, any thing in my preſent reflexions which may perhaps appear to you, to be urged impertinently. Thoſe circumſtances which have determined you to this ſecluſion from the world are poſſibly local. Out of Spain, you might perhaps be perſuaded to mingle with reſpectable ſociety, and to remain in a ſtate of unvaried ſolitude. If it is ſo, tell me. Sweden, although under a leſs genial climate, is not without circumſtances

ſtances to render it agreeable. The air is cold indeed, but pure and ſerene for ſix months in the year. After theſe come ſix months of ſpring, ſummer, and a delightful autumn, in which ſhort nights hardly divide the brighteſt, faireſt days that riſe. The ſun is unclouded, and by his gentle and permanent influence while he is with us, ſeems deſirous to conſole us for his long abſence. His light and heat give us a rapid and luxuriant vegetation. The earth ſeems impatiently to drink up all his rays, to renew the genial warmth in her boſom. How delightful to ſee the buds bloſſom, the crops ſpring up and ripen! Our air is the wholeſomeſt that blows over the earth, and communicates a ſingular degree of energy to plants, animals, and men. Theſe are the advantages of a climate which you ſuppoſe to be ſcorned by nature. No, my friend, man is no where elſe more robuſt, more native, or more happy. Happineſs is among you a delicate, a frail, and fading flower, but with us a vigorous and vivacious plant. You will ſee it flouriſh on the borders of our lakes, on our enamelled meads; you will there behold gaiety ſporting in the dance with our ſhepherds and their chaſte brides: the lakes you will ſee covered with barks full of our young lovers; and on the ſhores of thoſe narrower ſeas, ſmooth and azure as the cloudleſs ſky, you will

will hear a continual melody of ſongs of love and joy;—for our ruſtics are poets. With all the unconſtrained freedom in which our youth are indulged, you will behold the reign of innocence and modeſty as in the age of gold. With us alone of all the world is this age realized, or rather prolonged. We have provinces in which from time immemorial, the ſame purity of manners has been unalterably preſerved. The inhabitants of thoſe plains live in plenty, and religiouſly exerciſe the ancient duties of hoſpitality. Nothing in the uſages, habits, or dreſs has changed. They are laborious, juſt, and good, and have hardly need of laws, ſo virtuous are their manners. In two years, I engage to carry you thither. I might almoſt venture to ſay, that I enjoy the favour of my prince. I am at leaſt beloved by his children, eſpecially by him who is to ſucceed to the throne. There is not a worthier man in the world. They will rejoice to aſſign you an aſylum. You ſhall be recommended by Linnæus, and preſented by me. This I can offer you; and till the time of my return, I can enable you to proceed to France in the firſt ſhip which ſails from Carthagena, and there will I join you when the period of my embaſſy is expired, as I mean to ſtay ſome time in that country. Conſider whether

whether in your preſent ſolitude, you are likely to be always ſafe and happy.

While I ſpoke, he melted into tears, keeping his eyes ſteadily fixed upon mine, but retaining his calmneſs and recollection. No, ſaid he at laſt, with a heavy ſigh; her ſhade wanders not in thoſe regions you deſcribe; I cannot bid it follow me over the ſeas. Ah! why do not I know where ſhe is laid, that I might reſt my head upon her tomb-ſtone; I would water with my tears the earth which covers the aſhes of her I adore. I muſt not leave the land in which ſhe expired; let me atone by a ſlow, languiſhing death for the fatal crime of my love! All was then explained to me. I ſat ſilent, and mournfully affected.

I have now ſaid too much not to go on, continued he; and ſince your ſoul is ſo elevated, your ſentiments ſo compaſſionate, your friendſhip ſo generous, before my life is terminated by the ſorrow which waſtes me away, let me give myſelf the relief of explaining to you the remorſe I feel. Remember, Sir, that heaven and you are my only confidents.

My name is Maurice Formoſa. I was born at Zamora in the kingdom of Leon. I was an only ſon, and

and loſt my father who left me a conſiderable fortune, and became my own director, at an age when the moſt turbulent of all the paſſions firſt begins to diſturb the breaſt. I was travelling about with the uneaſineſs which naturally affects the heart, after it has begun to feel that it is made for love, but has not yet found an object on whom to fix its attachment. At Seville, while my mind was in this ſituation, at one of thoſe entertainments in which the Spaniſh youth glory in diſplaying their courage and addreſs in provoking and harraſſing a furious bull, I happened to ſtand near a party of ladies, all raviſhingly beautiful, in the midſt of whom was one lovely maid, who though leſs adorned than the reſt, outſhone them all as the morn outſhines and effaces the ſtars. My eye was no ſooner turned upon her, than I ceaſed to ſee any but her alone. Her look happened to meet mine, pierced my ſoul, and kindled that flame which will never be extinguiſhed till I breathe my lateſt ſigh. But, I ſtrove at that time to repreſs my uneaſineſs, and turned my view upon the combat.

In a ſhort time, after ſome preludes, the only effect of which was to rouſe the rage of the bull, a young man entered the circle who attacked him boldly, wounded him with his javelin, and ſo irri-

tated the animal that he turned upon the aſſailant, and came furiouſly upon him. The youth avoided his attack, but in leaping backwards fell to the ground before the outrageous foe. Stunned by his fall, he was within a little of being trampled under the feet of the bull. That inſtant, I heard a voice exclaim, *Ah! my brother! my brother!* It was ſhe herſelf. The cry pierced my ſoul. I turned, and ſaw her hands and eyes lifted up to heaven, and terror ſtrongly expreſſed in her countenance. In one moment, I had ſprung forward, leaped the barrier, and with my ſword in my hand, ſtood expoſed to all the rage of the bull. I provoked him, turned him upon myſelf, and thus gave the young man who had fallen before him, time to eſcape. Others joined me; and as I was neither armed nor dreſſed for entering the liſts, I returned to my place upon the amphitheatre.

The ſpectators by a general and involuntary movement expreſſed their applauſe of what I had done. But, I received at the ſame moment, a more flattering and much dearer reward than all their applauſe. The lovely ſiſter of the young man whom I had ſuccoured, bowed to me, and with an air, a voice, a look by which I had been more than paid for the deareſt bought victory, deigned to thank me.

me. Ah! madam, anſwered I, this were too much, had I even ſhed every drop of my blood in your ſervice.

Next morning, her brother, Don Leontio de Velamare, although recovered from the effects of his fall, came to ſee me, and brought a meſſage from the Marquis, his father, to let me know that the old nobleman was impatient to embrace me. I recount theſe particulars only to ſhew you, by how ſmooth and ſlippery a path I was carried into the abyſs where I was at laſt overwhelmed.

I accepted the invitation with a tremulous joy which you may conceive better than I can expreſs it. The family were aſſembled, and Valeria whoſe mother was dead, appeared in the company, among her relations. The eyes of all were fixed on me; my preſence ſeemed to produce a general joy; and every tongue bleſſed me. Valeria alone, with down-caſt eyes, and a countenance ſuffuſed with bluſhes, maintained a modeſt ſilence. But, her boſom heaved under the veil which covered it, with a motion which betrayed what was paſſing in her heart. Alas! the unfortunate maid had, as well as I, received the fatal wound which has ſince ruined us both.

Her father, Alphonſo de Velamara, a brave and haughty man, ſeemed leſs pleaſed with the ſafety of his only ſon, whom he called a raſh boy, than with the courage which had prompted me to venture, without other arms than my ſword, to turn the animals fury from him, upon myſelf. He aſked if this were the firſt time I had been engaged in a bull-fight; and when I anſwered that it was, he eagerly embraced me, as a man of gallantry and valour. It was this embrace and the compliment which accompanied it, that turned our heads, and proved the cauſe of our misfortunes. Ah! my friend! you ſhall hear how a riſing paſſion laid hold on thoſe circumſtances which were beſt formed to feed, and to flatter it.

From that day, I had permiſſion to go, from time to time, and pay my reſpects to the Marquis. I vainly hoped, but ſtill cheriſhed the hope, that I might, at ſome time or another find his daughter with him: and in the mean time, I cultivated the friendſhip of young Leontio; for he ſpoke of his ſiſter; and my only ſolace, while ſecluded from her ſight, was to hear him ſpeak of her. He took delight in praiſing her, without reſerve, and alas! without once doubting of the ill he was doing me. Sometimes, he would ſpeak of the beauties of her mind, her ingenuous

nuous candour, and delicate ſenſibility; at other times, he would praiſe the eaſy gracefulneſs of her air which gave perfection to the charms of her lovely figure. Then, ſuch of the beauties of her form as innocent ſecurity allowed a ſiſter to diſcover in the preſence of her father and brother were fondly deſcribed to me: and through this medium, ſo dangerous to an imagination like mine, all on fire, did I view her with the piercing eyes of love.

I confeſſed to her brother, that he owed his life to her, and that the ſhriek ſhe had uttered at ſeeing him ſtretched on the ſand, had made me ruſh forward to his aſſiſtance, without reflecting on the danger. He anſwered that his ſiſter had obſerved this, and whenever ſhe ſpoke of me, called me her champion. Her companion, ſaid I, might well be proud of the honour, if he were permitted to wear her colours! Truly, ſaid Leontio, to permit this is the leaſt ſhe can do; ſhe will be flattered, I doubt not, by the requeſt.

He repeated to her this converſation. She ſaw no harm in granting what I deſired, but thought it ſimply a pledge of the gratitude which ſhe owed to her brother's deliverer. I therefore received by the hands of Leontio, three ribbons, one yellow, another

ther ſcarlet, and the third, blue. The firſt, ſaid ſhe, is coloured like the bull from whom he ſaved you, brother; the ſecond expreſſes by its colour, the fire of courage with which he was animated; the blue, like the ſky when unclouded, is an emblem of my wiſhes that all his days may be tranquil and ſerene!——Serene, great God! ah! that fatal preſent was enough to darken the complexion of all my ſubſequent life.

I commanded my emotions ſo far, when I received it, that my young friend ſaw nothing in what I diſcovered but the exultation of ſelf-love, ſenſibly flattered by this ſlight teſtimony of approbation. I ventured, however to expreſs a wiſh that ſhe had added a device to the colours. You know nothing, replied he: it was always the buſineſs of the knight himſelf, to chuſe his own device, and the lady's part only to approve of it. You muſt then, ſaid I, offer her my homage, and deſire her to chuſe my device from among ſeveral which I ſhall give you to preſent to her. Then I gave him, in my hand writing,

MY WHOLE LIFE FOR ONE MOMENT.

ALL FOR GLORY AND LOVE.

LOYALTY, LOVE, AND CONSTANCY.

My

My friend imprudently diverted himſelf with my gallantry, and his ſiſter, ſtill more unſuſpecting than he, thought it natural that ſhe ſhould chuſe me a device, ſince I was to wear her colours. Alas! love, without her knowledge, perhaps determined her choice; and with the ſame artleſs innocence, ſhe kept the three devices in my handwriting, and ſent me back what ſhe prepared, written out by herſelf,

LOYALTY, LOVE, AND CONSTANCY.

Here is the device, ſaid Formoſo, wrought in her hair; and as he ſaid ſo, he took it from his arm, and ſhewed it me. And the billet, added he, on which ſhe wrote it with her hand is incloſed under this agate which ſerves as a claſp to the bracelet. I ſtill preſerve the dear line: it is all that remains of her: I ſhall carry it with me to the grave.

I was raviſhed, continued he, with this opening ſucceſs. But, the tranſport which I diſcovered, ſeemed a piece of folly at which my friend only laughed. Yeſterday, ſaid I, I was dubbed her knight; I now want nothing but armour; and that I will have. But, at what feſtival, or in what tournament, ſhall my young miſtreſs ſee me armed in compleat ſteel, mounted on a handſome palfrey, wearing

wearing a ſcarf, her favours nodding as a creſt upon my helmet, on my couraſs, a golden bull, and on my buckle theſe words which are already engraven on my heart; *Loyalty, love, and conſtancy.*

Pity, ſaid Leontio, jeſtingly, that tournaments are out of faſhion; the time may perhaps return, when they ſhall be celebrated as ſplendidly as in the days of old. In the mean time, all I can do for ſuch a new Amadis as you, is to procure you the glory of galloping with me, backwards and forwards beſide the walls of my father's garden, and near the windows of a pavilion in which my ſiſter ſometimes comes to take the air after ſun-ſet.

Neither he, nor I, nor Valeria herſelf ſaw any thing but mere amuſement in this piece of gallantry which he propoſed. Yet, for my part I thought myſelf inexpreſſibly happy in the proſpect of riding in her view, and wearing the favours with which ſhe had honoured me. My friend was even ſo imprudent as to tell his ſiſter, how impatiently I expected the appointed hour.

You never knew any thing more, ſaid he, ſpeaking to her of my folly. I believe he will run over the world to break lances in honour of your beauty.

His

His armour is not yet finiſhed; the golden bull and the device are not ſculptured by the artiſt. But, to-morrow-night, if you pleaſe, you ſhall ſee him, armed as becomes a gallant knight, ride with me backwards and forwards before your pavilion. She with an air of gaiety agreed to this dangerous interview, on condition however, that I ſhould know nothing of her being preſent; and that the windows of the pavilion ſhould be cloſe ſhut. A feeble barrier this, which her modeſty yet reſerved for its protection!

Sir, reſumed Formoſo, after pauſing here, in any other country in Europe, women have leſs pride and haughty dignity than in Spain. But, think of the burning ſun which here fires the blood of the fair ſex, as well as ours: Think of the provoking reſtraints under which they lead their youth, then think that Valeria who in the preſence of an imperious, ſtern, and inflexible father, whoſe very looks always made his children turn their eyes to the ground, had been always under the check of the moſt baſhful timidity, and now for the firſt time taſted the pleaſure of ſubduing the heart of a man whoſe courage ſhe had admired, and of exerciſing upon him the imperial ſway of love and beauty. Conſider too the ſimplicity natural to the female heart

heart at her age, which, with her eſteem for me removed from her mind all diſtruſt, or even ſuſpicion of danger, you will then pardon her too great ſenſibility.—Senſibility to my love.

Leontio and I, accordingly, mounting two of the fineſt horſes bred in Andaluſia; he wearing a ſcarf and a white feather, and I gayly adorned with the ribbons which the lovely queen of my heart had beſtowed, rode gallantly backwards and forwards, twenty times, before the windows of her pavilion. I knew that ſhe was preſent, but this was not enough to ſatisfy me. I was mortified to ſee that the window opened not. Leontio, ſaid I ſighing, the time is no more when even the haughtieſt dame uſed to honour her knight at leaſt with a glance; but now this gallant homage is ſcorned.

Valeria felt herſelf hurt by this reproach. She opened the window and appeared. Sir knight, ſaid ſhe, with a modeſt and dignified air, why ſhould you think me unjuſt? Why ſhould you aſcribe what is an effect of the timidity natural at my age, to an ungrateful forgetfulneſs of your favours? Can I be ſo unnatural as to have no pleaſure in ſeeing him to whom I am indebted for the preſervation of my brother's

brother's life? Are theſe favours I have permitted you to wear, proofs of my ingratitude or contempt?

Ah! madam, ſaid I, approaching the window of the pavilion, pardon a momentary impatience and pain, and humble not him who has yet done ſo little for you, by ſpeaking of his ſervices. You behold me proudly wearing marks of your eſteem, which I ſhould think cheaply paid for by the ſacrifice of my life. Add to your other favours that of deigning to receive the homage of a life which can have no valve with your knight, unleſs you allow him to devote it to your ſervice.

Well! ſiſter, ſaid Leontio, mocking me, did not I tell you, that you would have the honour of raiſing up a new Amadis?——Good young man! ah! what didſt thou think of? What hadſt thou done? And into what a ſnare didſt thou entice us both? Sir knight, replied ſhe, mimicking, with gay and artleſs ſimplicity, the language of chivalry in the days of old, the rights which you have acquired to my gratitude and eſteem, are to me dear and ſacred. I accept your homage; and be always intereſted alike in the glory and the happineſs of the valiant Don Maurice Formoſo.

Wonderfully

Wonderfully well! cried Leontio; one might even ſay, that you have the old romance language by heart.

After making this reply in a tone of ſweetneſs at which my heart leaped for joy, ſhe bowed to us, and ſhutting the window, diſappeared from my ſight.

This innocent ſcene, in which the brother and ſiſter were both in ſport, was ſoon to become fatal to us all three. Fooliſh is he who ſports with burning coals, or poiſoned arrows! But, ſtill more fooliſh he who makes a ſport of love!

PART II.

AFTER a ſhort pauſe, contined the Count de Creutz, my ſolitary botaniſt proceeded thus:

No, love is not a power to be ſafely ſported with. And, when moſt ſimple, and ingenuous, then is he moſt to be feared.

My love ſoon aſſumed a gloomy and penſive caſt, and would admit of no confident, but its object. From that time, I ſhould have diſtruſted myſelf; for innocence no ſooner begins to diſſemble than its native character is loſt. I left my friend to divert himſelf

himſelf with my fancy for the practices of chivalry; but took pains to acquaint his ſiſter that nothing could be more ſeriouſly intended.

Youth is naturally vain and preſumptuous; and with my anxiety to know whether Valeria's heart was really affected in my favour, there was already intermingled a fond perſuaſion that ſhe regarded me with ſomething more than bare gratitude or eſteem.

I therefore hoped, after the pavilion ſcene, that ſhe would come often back to muſe and ſigh at the window where ſhe had ſeen her knight; and every day, I repaired, at the ſame hour, to the ſame place, and there, with anxious expectation wandered about, like a diſcontented ghoſt, raiſing my eyes a thouſand times, to the window where I hoped again to ſee my love. The cruel window continued cloſe ſhut for a whole month. At laſt, it opened, and Valeria, in pity, deigned to appear, with Thereſa, her faithful maid.

Is this then your conſtant walk, Sir knight? ſaid ſhe, with an affecting air. From this I learned, that although ſhe had not before appeared, ſhe had ſometimes however obſerved me: I alſo, perceived

by thoſe words that I might ſpeak to her in the preſence of Thereſa, as a knight addreſſing the lady of his heart. In this character therefore I ſpoke.

Yes, Madam, replied I, here I come to muſe; if it may be called muſing, when the whole ſoul is filled with one object from which nothing can divert its thoughts.—This thought which ſo entirely engroſſes you, muſt no doubt, be glory.—Yes, Madam, glory through which we merit happineſs, glory which alone can juſtify the wiſhes of an aſpiring and feeling heart, glory which no generous ſoul has ever reſiſted; her would I worſhip as the ſtar on whoſe influence my deſtiny muſt depend. But, alas! ſhe ſeems to flee him who purſues her; ſhe long refuſes the vain deſires of youth; and when at laſt ſhe ſuffers herſelf to be overtaken, it is then too late; the prize has been ſeized by other hands; and all that has been done for glory has been loſt to love. This word which now eſcaped from me for the firſt time, raiſed the blood in my cheeks. Valeria, more innocent than I, heard it without a bluſh. You are very ſerious in your reflexions, ſir, ſaid ſhe; I cannot adviſe you to indulge in them. I, for my part, think hope the natural companion of courage; and I exhort my champion to be noble and juſt in all his thoughts and all his actions, and

then

then to deſpair of nothing. Then changing the topic of diſcourſe, ſhe praiſed the lovely ſky, and richly enamelled fields before us: I leave the ſcene with regret, ſaid ſhe; it gives all the pleaſure I enjoy.

My love, or if you chuſe to call it ſo, my ſelf-love, explained all I had heard in its own favour: and I returned home, with a heart delighted with the ſweeteſt illuſions. Above all, theſe words; *Hope is the natural companion of glory*, remained deeply engraven on my heart.

Next day, I returned at the ſame hour, to the ſame place; but the window was ſhut. I returned on the day following; and it was opened again. But, only Thereſa appeared, and ſhe addreſſed me in theſe cruel words; Sir knight, Donna Valeria conjures you in the name of all that is deareſt to her, to walk no more in this place by yourſelf. *After ſpeaking thus, ſhe ſhut the window, before I* could make any anſwer. I retired in conſternation and deſpair. Would to heaven that the dear object of my paſſion had rather abandoned me ſilently to hopeleſs miſery.

I paſſed the night in agony. What had happened? Had Valeria heard any complaints or reproaches

upon my account? Had I cauſed her tears to flow? Yes, without any other cauſe, ſhe herſelf or Thereſa might be alarmed, leſt the pavilion might ſeem a place of rendezvous, and our meetings might give riſe to diſagreeable reports. This thought calmed my anxiety, and I approved, although with pain ſo wiſe a precaution. However, we could have no farther intercourſe, no more mutual communication of our thoughts and feelings. What ſhould I do? I adored Valeria; yet muſt not ſee her.

Such were my reflexions, and ſuch the ſtate of my heart, when I ſaw Leontio enter my apartment with an air of gay ſatisfaction. My friend, ſaid he, I come to tell you important news. It is a ſecret I have accidentally come to the knowledge of, and which I have not yet mentioned even to my ſiſter. There is a very great affair in agitation with us.

What is it? aſked I with a degree of alarm which I ſtrove to diſguiſe. You poſſibly know, ſaid he, Ferdinand d'Ovandes, the only ſon of one of the richeſt men in all Caſtile, and a man in the higheſt favour at court?—Well! what of him?—This Don Ferdinand is the man intended by my father to be my ſiſter's huſband.

Theſe

Theſe words gave my heart too rude a ſtroke. My countenance was overſpread with a ſudden bluſh, and immediately after became pale as death. I trembled, fainted, and ſunk to the ground. Leontio ſaw a cold ſweat upon my brow, and when he ſpoke to me, perceived that I heard him not. My eyes were cloſed, my lips cold and livid, I ſcarcely breathed, and my friend feared, that he might ſee me die in his arms. Wretch that I am! why waſt thou ſolicitous to reſtore me to life? Why didſt thou not leave me to die, while I was yet innocent?

When by his care I was ſomewhat recovered, I began at firſt to aſcribe my ſudden illneſs to a natural accident. But, he was not to be impoſed upon. Seeing, therefore, that he had diſcovered the ſecret of my deſpair; yes, my friend, ſaid I, the news you have brought, is the ſtroke of death to my heart. I ſhall not recover. I go to lay me down, and die, far from Seville. Receive my laſt farewel.

Heavens! ſaid Leontio, trembling, what miſchief have I occaſioned! did my ſiſter but know, ſhe who has ſo grateful a ſenſe of my obligations to you!— Oh, no! let her remain for ever ignorant of the miſchief ſhe has done us; were ſhe to know, it would make her too unhappy. What! and all this

by a mere frolic, without once thinking of it!—— Love is ſure a terrible paſſion! But, what were your views?—To deſerve her, anſwered I, by praiſeworthy deeds, to learn from herſelf, whether, if I ſhould obtain her father's conſent, I might flatter myſelf with the hope that I ſhould have the conſent of her heart; and with a name and a fortune by no means contemptible, to aſpire to her hand.

Why then ſhould you deſpair? ſaid he. Speak to my father. I know he eſteems you. He has a due ſenſe of what you did for me, and may perhaps change his purpoſe, in your favour. You will readily believe that I ſhall be happy if this can be accompliſhed; and my ſiſter too would hardly be ſorry, if you obtained the preference.

You muſt once more, my friend, ſaid I, perſuade her to come to her pavilion, and ſuffer me to converſe with her a few moments under the window. I would conſult her own heart, without witneſſes. You have ſeen that this is an affair on which my life depends: and ſince you have reſtored me to life, preſerve me by your continued kindneſs. Prevail then with your lovely ſiſter, to hear me: and mention not to her, that another huſband is intended her by your father.

Valeria eaſily yielded to Leontio's requeſt; and Thereſa herſelf when ſhe knew my intentions, did not ſeek to hinder our meeting. I was alone; my love came alſo alone; when ſhe had opened the window, it ſeemed the gate of heaven that was opened. What a charm do the hopes of unhappy love add, in ſuch moments, to the aſpect of the object beloved! Valeria had never before appeared ſo beautiful. She ſeemed the ſtar which riſes to cheer and guide the ſhipwrecked mariner.

No, ſaid I, it is impoſſible to expreſs what joy your preſence gives me. But, the more bliſsful the preſent moment, ſo much the more painful are the hours I paſs languiſhing to be admitted into your ſight. It is an inconceivable torment, to count every moment, without being able to urge their ſpeed. I count the moments myſelf, ſaid ſhe, and I have not your courage. An expreſſion like this from her lips was enough to compenſate an age of torments.

I anſwered her in the moſt ardent and affecting language that love could inſpire, and was going to aſk her with tremulous heſitation, to permit me to demand her in marriage from her father. She prevented me; ſuch was the ingenuouſneſs of her heart.

heart. Formoſo, ſaid ſhe, the faithful Thereſa and I have reflected, how much my reputation might be hurt, if the ſtory of our interviews were to take air, and to be repreſented as a romantic adventure or intrigue. You love me, I believe, and ſo Leontio aſſures me. It would be cruel to make one to whom we owe ſo much, unhappy. My father, had it not been for you, would have loſt his only ſon, the ſole heir of his name and family. I know your birth. I am told alſo, (although to me this is a matter of leſs concern) that your fortune correſponds to it. Avail yourſelf of theſe advantages: And may I be proud in the eyes of the world as I ſhall be ſecretly happy to love as my huſband, my noble and valiant knight.

Overjoyed, tranſported by her kindneſs, I promiſed to ſpeak to her father without delay, ſince ſhe had encouraged me; and thus ended the bliſsful interview.

Leontio informed me, what perſons his father was moſt acceſſible to, and who had the greateſt influence with him. Many of them were my own relations. I engaged them to ſpeak in my behalf.

The Marquis heard their propoſals coldly, but politely. He praiſed me with an air of haughty condeſcenſion,

condeſcenſion, but yet with kindneſs. He added, that any family might be proud of my alliance; that he could not but think himſelf obliged by my inclination to connect myſelf with him; that he believed me to poſſeſs abilities and generous diſpoſitions which might raiſe the name of my anceſtors to new honours; but, that the eſtabliſhment of his daughter was a matter of ſuch importance as to require the moſt mature deliberation; and he concluded with demanding time to determine.

This was not the moſt favourable anſwer that might have been given; but neither was it abſolutely diſcouraging. From a man of the Marquis's character, it even ſeemed flattering; for he was far from laviſh of either her praiſes or his eſteem. At laſt, as he ſtill continued to ſee me with his wonted kindneſs, Leontio and I perſuaded ourſelves that his only reaſon for aſking the delay, had been that he might quit himſelf handſomely of the other engagement; and Valeria and Thereſa were of the ſame opinion as we, although not ſo confident in it. Our intercourſe therefore became daily more frequent and familiar. By appearing before the window, I might have given room for ſcandal; and Thereſa having for this reaſon forbidden her young miſtreſs to encourage viſits there, thought it more

prudent that we ſhould meet where we might not be expoſed to the malicious obſervations of paſſengers. This was another ſtep towards the precipice.

I had the liberty of viſiting my friend: the garden was open to us: and no perſon in the houſe could ſee us on our walks. The pavilion ſtood at one end of the garden; and Valeria with her companion, could follow us thither by a different way. Even if we had happened to be ſeen together, the preſence of my friend, and the watchful fidelity of Thereſa ſeemed to remove all appearance of myſtery. Thus was I enticed onward from one ſnare to another by my unhappy deſtiny.

Nothing could be more innocent than our ſweet converſations in that retired pavilion. Even the gaiety of Leontio reſpected the baſhful modeſty of the meeting. My love wore the air of devotion; Valeria's tenderneſs never for a moment laid aſide the veil of pure and ſimple friendſhip; my looks were no leſs timid than my language: her eyes were never raiſed towards me, unleſs to thank me for my prayers to heaven to make her happy as ſhe was beautiful. But, to whom ſhould the care of her happineſs be intruſted? To me? I ventured to hope ſo. Leontio was more confident. The expreſſions,

preſſions, *eſteem* and *kindneſs*, which his father had uſed in ſpeaking of me; the kind reception he had always given me, both before and after I aſked his daughter; the ſatisfaction with which he ſeemed to ſee his ſon cultivate my friendſhip;—theſe were all ſo many rays of hope, which we carefully collected into one focus, and which altogether formed a gay and bewitching illuſion by which we were miſerably deceived. Thus the proſpect of marriage purified all our wiſhes, and chaſtened the deſires, and ſanctified all the vows of love.

But, in the mean time, weary of a paſſion which I was ſtill obliged to reſtrain, and which became every day more ardent, and was the more inflamed for being confined to my own breaſt; I thought that I might at leaſt complain to Valeria of the torture my heart ſuffered in being obliged to make ſuch ſevere and long-continued efforts againſt itſelf; and I hoped to obtain a favourable hearing, if I could drop a billet into her hand, in which I might modeſtly expreſs how much I ſuffered, while forced to wait in ſilent anxiety for her father's determination, without daring to ſolicit him.

I came, one day, melancholy, to the pavilion. Leontio urged me to tell him the reaſon. I replied that

that it was impoſſible for me to explain myſelf; but that I felt a weight upon my heart, and was waiting with inexpreſſible uneaſineſs for the moment of relief. Soon after, taking advantage of the trouble and confuſion with which thoſe words had affected his ſiſter, I ventured to give her the fatal billet.

I am ſinking under my griefs, ſaid I in it, and my heart can confide them to none but you. Conſole, encourage me; be my counſel and my guide. And, while I ſtrove to deſcribe to her the torments of the uncertainty in which I was left by her father's long ſilence, I avowed, that, of all the ills to which my life might be expoſed, the only one which I had neither courage to look forward to, nor ſtrength to bear, was, the refuſal of her hand.

Maid too generous and tender, alas! I afterwards learned, that ſhe had watered thoſe words with her tears. O God! ſaid ſhe, he ſaved my brother; he is now in greater danger himſelf; and if my father refuſes or delays to calm his ſorrows and anxieties, he muſt be abandoned to deſpair. Let me interpoſe to relieve him. She deigned to anſwer me: and her anſwer was ingenuous, tender, and ſenſible, like herſelf.

Be not too urgent, ſaid ſhe, in the end of her letter. My father is arbitrary in his temper, and your impatience might offend him. Leave him to determine upon your fate and mine. Imitate the reſpectful ſilence of his daughter; imitate alſo her fortitude; and maintain that conſtancy which your device promiſes, and which is equally honourable to love, whether it be ſucceſsful or unfortunate.

I replied with tranſports of extravagant joy, and proteſtations of devoted attachment, and implicit obedience to her will. But by truſting to her the care of my conduct, I eſtabliſhed a ſecret connexion between us, that fatal intimacy which is the moſt dangerous ſnare that love can lay.

On her ſide were reaſon, goodneſs of heart, all the ſimple virtues of nature, and all the charms of innocence; on mine, the moſt paſſionate ſentiments, the moſt lively anxieties, the moſt impatient deſires, all that can ſpring up in a glowing imagination and a heart inflamed. Such were thoſe letters which our conſcious hands alternately delivered and received, without the privity of thoſe who were with us. You will naturally conceive that the impaſſioned ardour of my billets would inſenſibly penetrate the

ſoul of Valeria, and that ſhe would ſometimes partake of my delirium.

While I was thus perſuaded that ſhe loved me with ingenuous tenderneſs, and ſhe, that I loved her with the moſt ſacred, and at the ſame time the moſt violent paſſion, we were already ſo pleaſed, ſo raviſhed with our mutual hopes, that we would, neither of us, have changed our condition for any other in the world: we could be happier only than we ourſelves then were. But, this illuſion of inchantment ſoon vaniſhed.

I ſaw Leontio approach me, one day, with trouble and uneaſineſs in his countenance. My friend, ſaid he, I know not what ſudden diſtreſs has befallen my ſiſter. I have juſt left her extremely melancholy. Thereſa and I have both vainly urged her to open her heart to us. She maintains an obſtinate ſilence; and ſays that ſhe will diſcloſe her mind to you only. My father is juſt gone out: the horſes were yoked in the carriage: we ſhall be at liberty, therefore; come, and ſee her.

When we arrived, Valeria and her attendant were in the garden. She made a ſign with her hand, to her brother, to conduct me to the pavilion, and ſoon

ſoon after entered it herſelf, with Thereſa. Leave me, ſaid ſhe, with a cold, calm, and gloomy air, leave me alone with Don Maurice. I have a ſecret to reveal to him which none but he muſt yet know.

When we were left without witneſſes. You have promiſed, ſaid ſhe, obedience to my will. The time is come when the ſincerity of your profeſſions muſt be put to the trial. I have two painful efforts to require of you. But, before I explain myſelf farther, you muſt ſwear by every ſacred name, to obey me.

I underſtand you, ſaid I, I am to live, yet ſee you no more. You cannot be mine. You are to be given to another: and you would have me, cruel creature! to ſurvive the loſs of you. No, I will not ſwear to this.

Her heart was then cruelly torn, and tears ſtreamed from her eyes. Formoſo, ſaid ſhe, it is too true. My father has pronounced my doom. Ferdinand d'Ovandes will be here to-morrow. Within eight days, I ſhall be his bride. I wiſhed to tell you my misfortune, and to bid you a laſt farewel. I feared, that if my brother had told you the fatal news, you might have been driven to ſome raſh act of de-

ſpair. Alas! that life which I ſhould have rejoiced to make happy, can no more be mine; but it will be ever dear to me; and remember, Formoſo, that if you take away your own life, you take away mine by the ſame act: you pierce two hearts at once. My misfortune I may ſurvive, ſince duty condemns me to it; but your death I could not ſurvive.

I liſtened with ſilent ſorrow, and neither ſighed nor wept. Her heart was contracted, my eyes were dry; the flame within me exhauſted the ſource of my tears, and burnt up my blood.

It is done then, ſaid I, in a ſobbing voice, you become the wife of Ovandes! He is preferred to me! Ovandes ſhall be your huſband. You have never loved me, you love me not, you have deceived me, Valeria!—I deceive you! ſaid ſhe, can you cruelly plunge the dagger deeper in my heart, with which it is already wounded. Am I at liberty to diſpoſe of myſelf?—If you deceive not me, then, replied I, you deceive——Inhuman man, ſaid ſhe, load me with abuſe, make me baſe and guilty in my own eyes; you may; my fooliſh love has given you this advantage over me; but I ſhall live long enough to expiate my weakneſs by my ſufferings. To obey my father is the firſt of my duties, Heaven will do the

the reſt. Yes, heaven will, I hope, give me ſtrength ——To forget me.—It muſt be ſo!—You forget me! cried I; and at theſe words, I drew my ſword to pierce my heart. Trembling, wild, and deſperate, ſhe threw herſelf before me, turned away the point of the weapon from my breaſt, and fell into my arms, crying out mercy! pity!

Ah! what a ſudden revolution now took place in our breaſts! Imagine that you behold us in all the diſorder of extreme ſorrow, her boſom heaving againſt mine; her face all wet with tears, leaning upon my cheek; our lips meeting, and our ſighs and tears mingled together. Ah! ſorrow, fear, deſpair, what ſay I? reſpect, modeſty, then expired all together. I throw a veil over my crime.

That momentary crime of which remembrance ſtill renews the puniſhment, for which my tears ſhall never ceaſe to flow, ſeemed to have altered the character of Valeria: and to her natural timidity, an aſtoniſhing degree of reſolution ſuddenly ſucceeded.

Formoſo, ſaid ſhe, when we were ſomewhat recovered from our diſorder, I am your's, and will be your's alone. Ah! your father, ſaid I, your inflexible father, the haughtieſt, the moſt abſolute,

the moſt arbitrary of men will prevail with his threats over your preſent reſolution.—My father never can obtain what is impoſſible. He can never force me from your arms to the arms of another. So ſaying, ſhe wounded her hand ſlightly, and with her own blood ſigned a ſolemn engagement never to acknowledge any other huſband than Don Maurice Formoſo. (It is there, ſaid he, ſhewing me his bracelet; it is there, that ſacred pledge of my love.) I, in the ſame manner ſigned with my own blood, alas! a vain engagement to live and die the huſband of Valeria de Velamara. After this act, our fears and diſtreſſes were compoſed into a deceitful calm, and I returned to Leontio.

My friend, ſaid I, your fears were but too well founded; you had but too good information. Your ſiſter's marriage with Ovandes is determined upon. He will ſoon be here; the Marquis, your father, has given notice to his daughter, that her lover is on his way hither. This is the mortal ſtroke which I muſt now ſtrive to parry.

I am as much diſtreſſed by it as you, replied Leontio coldly. You know with what joy I ſhould have preferred you for my brother-in-law. But, my father's will is an invariable law to us. What

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can we do? It is a misfortune, but a misfortune which admits of no remedy; when my father ſpeaks, we muſt obey. Beſides, the huſband whom he has choſen for my ſiſter is a very proper match. Ferdinand is of a noble family, poſſeſſes an immenſe fortune, has a handſome figure, and is eminently brave. My ſiſter might have been happy with you, I believe; but, with him, I hope ſhe will be ſtill happier. Theſe words were ſo many daggers to my heart.——

I fear, ſhe will not, ſaid I. Conſult her yourſelf; and if ſhe is averſe to this marriage, in the name of nature, in the name of friendſhip, dear Leontio, try all poſſible means to diſſuade your father from it. This language ſeemed to give him offence.

My ſiſter, anſwered he, is of noble birth; and, not to offend you, I cannot help hoping better things than you ſeem to augur of her heart and underſtanding. But, although ſhe ſhould be as averſe from this marriage of her father's choice, as you would inſinuate, he is not a man, believe me, who may be prevailed with, to change his reſolution. His word is irrevocable. When he has pledged his honour, no power on earth will make him draw back. For Valeria nothing, therefore, remains,

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but obedience; and for you, ſince I muſt tell you ſo, nought but abſence and change of place. I myſelf have been imprudent, in preſuming too far upon ſlight hopes in your favour. But, it is not yet too late to remedy the evil which my thoughtleſs complaiſance has occaſioned. For your own ſake, and for the ſake of my ſiſter, I muſt here inſiſt, that you ſee her no more, but break off all intercourſe with her.

Nothing, to be ſure, could be more reaſonable. But, can the madneſs of love endure to receive laws? I did not expect, anſwered I, to find friendſhip ſo cold in the heart of Leontio. He is but little affected, I ſee, with the diſtreſſes of his friend; he can very eaſily bear to ſee me miſerable. I thank him for his advice: and as to his prohibitions, I know not what right he has to impoſe them. As he was about to anſwer in an angry, threatening tone, I went away, without waiting to hear him.

Next day, I learned that Ovandes was arrived, and that the gate of the palace of Velamara was ſhut againſt me; a precaution which the Marquis might have found ineffectual, but which his ſon had, no doubt, taken for him.

I learned,

I learned, alſo, by a billet from Thereſa, that Leontio had complained to Valeria of my audacious anſwer. Valeria had gently ſpoken in my juſtification, with conſiderable courage. But, all her courage forſook her, when ſhe was obliged to endure an interview with her new lover; ſhe was taken with an inflammatory fever, which, after three days illneſs appearing to be dangerous, ſhe ſent for an holy eccleſiaſtic, and confided her griefs to him. My father, ſaid ſhe, after making her confeſſion, I have been weak; but never, never can I be falſe and perfidious. Although I reflect upon my fault with bitter regret, the cauſe to which it was owing ſtill ſubſiſts unextinguiſhed in my heart. To paſs out of the arms of one of theſe men into the arms of the other, would be, to betray them both.—— While my heart is ſtill filled with the dear idea of my former lover, can I be ſo baſe as to accept another. Perſuade my father either to kill me or ſend me to a convent.

That wiſe and virtuous man had heard enough to make him fear a misfortune which Valeria's innocence did not foreſee. He made ſo good an uſe of the influence which his character gave him, that Velamara, either to allow his daughter time for the recovery of her health, or to avoid a quarrel with the

the worthy confeſſor, yielded to his ſolicitations, and conſented to delay the marriage.

My rival was however hurt at the coldneſs with which he had been received. Not that he was in love; but, pride is not leſs jealous than love. I was the perſon he blamed for the injury which he ſuppoſed, he ſuffered. And, on me he determined to avenge himſelf. How could he learn, that I ſtood in the way of his ſucceſs? Could Leontio have been ſo imprudent as to tell him? I ſuſpected as much, but perhaps unjuſtly. However it might be, certain it is, that I had loſt Leontio's friendſhip: and in a fit of paſſion, he went even ſo far as to ſecond the reſentment of Ovandes.

More than a month was now expired, and yet the Marquis of Velamara had taken no reſolution with reſpect to the fate of his daughter. She had perſiſted in her humble requeſt, to be ſent to a convent: and you know what influence ſentiments of religion have among us. When a daughter declares, that ſhe feels an inward call from God, paternal authority can rarely oppoſe the heavenly impulſe. Velamara firmly oppoſed his daughter's deſire, but durſt put no conſtraint upon her. All was therefore in ſuſpenſe, when Thereſa herſelf,

wrapped

wrapped in a cloak, came to me one night, with all the terror of a criminal juſt eſcaped from juſtice, viſible in her countenance.

Maurice, ſaid ſhe, it is now too late for my unhappy Miſtreſs to retire to a convent. Come, and ſee her, ſhe is in deſpair, and at the riſk of being utterly undone, awaits you in the garden. We have formed a ladder of ropes upon which you may ſcale the wall.

I repaired to the place appointed, under the concealment of the night, which was between dark and clear, I found Valeria in the deepeſt diſtreſs. My friend, ſaid ſhe, to-morrow-night, we muſt make our eſcape. It is now my only hope. Be here to-morrow-night, by the ſame hour. It is no longer my life, but the life of your child we are to provide for.

Ah! Sir, you have been in love? reſumed Maurice, addreſſing himſelf to me.—Yes, I know what love is.—Were you ever a father?—Alas! I never was. —I cannot then explain to you what I felt at hearing her mention, *the life of your child.* All that is moſt animated and tender in what nature and love can inſpire,—did I ſay, to ſoothe and encourage her whom I now regarded as my wife. When I left her,

her, I promiſed to be ready next night by the ſame hour, before the pavilion, with a poſt-chaiſe and two horſes fleeter than the wind.

Cadiz, a ſhip, and France were to place us in ſecurity. Deceitful hope! that ſecurity to which I fondly looked forward was far, far diſtant.

As I was going away, whether it were, that Leontio had been watching his ſiſter, or that Ovandes had obſerved and followed me, hardly had I proceeded an hundred paces beyond the garden-wall, when by the faint light of the new moon, I ſaw two men waiting for me. That inſtant, one of the two advanced againſt me, threw down his cloak, and without ſaying a word, attacked me, ſword in hand. I defended myſelf: he ſtood not on his guard; but was ſoon wounded, and, as he fell, cried, Ah! traitor! I thought the voice was Leontio's: and you may eaſily conceive, what agony I felt. The other came now upon me; and from the fury with which he attacked me, I ſaw that he was my rival. He ruſhed upon me, while my head was down, preſſed me hard, andwounded me in the ſword-arm. Becoming furious in my turn, I plunged my weapon into his breaſt, and he fell and lay wallowing in his blood. I ran back to the pavilion,

to

to perſuade Valeria to come down and eſcape with me, that very night. But ſhe was gone; the ladder was removed, and the windows were ſhut. I called; but no voice anſwered.

Bloody, in confuſion, and, if that be poſſible, an innocent homicide,—I now turned back. The horror which I felt at finding two bodies both fallen by my ſword, ſtopped me, and made me take a different way. Only, that the wounded might not die without receiving aſſiſtance, I ſent two of the common people to the place where I ſaid, I had heard a noiſe.

I ſpent the night in agony. Being now an involuntary murderer, and obliged to become a raviſher, I ſaw myſelf by a ſeries of crimes, all unintentional, expoſed to the rage of two powerful families: I beheld before me fetters, diſgrace, the ſcaffold, and, which was ſtill more horrible, the diſhonour, ſhame, and deſpair of her, who, but for me, had been adored in her country, and whoſe days had been all one bright ſunſhine of glory and happineſs. What a dreadful deſtiny! What accumulated miſery!

By day-break, I ſent Franciſco, my moſt confidential valet, to hear what was ſaid in Seville about

my laſt night's adventure. Nothing was talked of, but a rencounter by night, in which Ferdinand Ovandes had been left dead on the ſpot, and Leontio de Velamara dangerouſly wounded. By whom? or for what cauſe? This nobody knew, and for the whole day no mention was made of me.

You will readily conceive in what anxious uneaſineſs I paſſed the day, making preparations for taking my flight aſſoon as night and the hour appointed for my appearance at the pavilion, ſhould arrive: I repaired to the place. The hour elapſed, but no Valeria appeared. I was ſtruck with terror. I however encouraged myſelf as well as I could, ſtood ſtill, reſtrained my breathing, and liſtened. But no voice or ſound could I hear. The hours paſſed on, and ſtill all was ſilent. My horſes neighed, pawed the ground, and ſeemed no leſs impatient than myſelf. I waited thus till day-break, but the pavilion opened not.

Nothing could be more dangerous than for me to return to Seville. I did return, however; for I could not prevail with myſelf to begone, without Valeria. Franciſco was ſent out to diſcover, if poſſible, what was doing in the palace of Velamara. But, in vain. Gloomy and impenetrable ſilence reigned in the palace.

lace. The ſervants were all in conſternation: and the fear with which they were impreſſed by the ſullen and threatning ſorrow of their maſter, had even rendered them wild and ſurly to all who approached. It might have been ſaid, that Velamara was ſerved by mutes. No information was therefore to be obtained.

On the following night I repaired in like manner as before, to the pavilion. But, my expectation was ſtill fruitleſs. Thus rendered deſperate, I ſuffered ſome maddening notions to ariſe in my mind, of attempting by violence what was impoſſible. But, in the mean time, the good clergyman whom Valeria had mentioned as her faithful and pious confident, came to ſee me.

Formoſo, ſaid he, begone, flee, get beyond ſeas, remain not another night in Seville. To-morrow, you will be arreſted, and ruined. Leontio is reviving; he is yet ſpeechleſs, but will not remain long ſo. Ah! ſaid I, my father, heaven be praiſed! but if I ſhould retire, know you what I leave behind, and in what a condition? I know; but ſhe and her maid are ſhut up together in confinement; it is impoſſible for them to eſcape. Juſt Heaven! cried I, and would you have me then to care for my own

ſafety! It is her deſire, her command.—Ah! if you know all, can I leave her?—What can you do for her, by ruining yourſelf? She is carefully watched, and conſtantly under her father's eye.—Well! at her father's feet will I fall in my deſpair.—This is what ſhe forbids you to do. You know not the inexorable temper of Velamara. He would cauſe you to be dragged from his feet to the ſcaffold. Think with what horror he would view a man who ſhould avow himſelf the murderer of his ſon, and the ſeducer of his daughter. Ah! far from hoping either clemency or pity, dread rather the violence which he might be tempted to uſe againſt his own child! But this is too horrible an idea. But, what I muſt warn you of, is that if you are ſeized, thrown into fetters, and condemned to death: ſhe will inſtantly die, and you will be guilty of her death.—And if I leave her what muſt become of her, O God!—Yes, it is God you ought to implore; to him you muſt have recourſe; I promiſe you the aid of that God who is every where preſent, and ever ready to ſuccour thoſe who call upon him. My hope, continued he, is to place Valeria in ſecurity, in a cloiſter. I will take care that ſhe be ſecretly delivered there. But, to this end, time muſt be allowed to ſoothe the firſt tranſports of grief in her father's heart.

Shall

Shall I not at leaſt know from you, from time to time, ſaid I, what is her ſituation, what you do for her, and whether I may not come to her aſſiſtance? You ſhall, depend upon me, ſaid that charitable man; I will be faithful, I promiſe you by all that is ſacred. Adieu, then, father, ſaid I, weeping and embracing him; I intruſt her to you; forſake her not. You ſhall know the place of my retreat.

Franciſco's advice was, that I ſhould make haſte to Cadiz, before the report of my duels could reach that city, and ſhould go on board the firſt veſſel I ſaw ready to ſail; and this would have been the wiſeſt part for me to act. But, how could I leave thoſe ſhores, without knowing what was become of Valeria! To let the wide ocean divide me from her; this was what I could not reſolve upon, had I been to die a thouſand deaths. Well then, ſaid Franciſco, let us ſtrike towards the mountains of Grenada, in a direction by which we may travel through by paths into Murcia. I was born there. My father ſtill lives there. He will afford you a retreat in which you may be ſafe. There you will at leaſt be ſure of not being betrayed.

I followed this advice, and retiring to the houſe of the old man, ſent Franciſco to wait upon the

good clergyman, Valeria's confeſſor. But, he was now no longer admitted into the palace of Velamara. Whether it were, that his correſpondence with me had begun to be ſuſpected, or that he had been ſuppoſed to confirm Valeria officiouſly in her intention of retiring to a convent, he had been diſcharged from viſiting her. All that I learned from him, therefore, was that he had in vain inſiſted upon being permitted to ſee her again.

Franciſco brought me this anſwer from the prieſt, with information at the ſame time, that a criminal proceſs was commenced againſt me, and proſecuted with the utmoſt keenneſs. Velamara, or Leontio were not named: regard to the honour of Valeria had impoſed ſilence upon them. But, the implacable Ovandes, father to Ferdinand, rendered abſolutely deſperate by the death of his ſon, called for vengeance with the wildeſt tranſports of fury. I know not what witneſſes were found to depoſe againſt me,—perhaps thoſe men whom I had ſent to the aſſiſtance of the wounded; but, my flight ſo far corroborated their evidence as to ſatisfy the judges of my guilt. I was condemned to death, and my goods were confiſcated.

h!

Ah! heaven knows that this was not the ſevereſt ſtroke to me! But what could I think, when, after another month, Franciſco came to tell me what he had learned from our good confeſſor! No, my friend, ſaid he, you muſt expect nothing farther from my zeal. Concerning my penitent, I have nothing to communicate to you, but the ſaddeſt ſuſpicions. What I am certain of, is, that ſhe is not in the palace of Velamara, nor even in Seville; that ſhe is in none of the convents which are known to me, and that no perſon knows what is become of her. Alas! where can ſhe be? enquired Franciſco, in terror and aſtoniſhment. The good prieſt lifted up his hands, drooped his head, and ſaid: Aſk her father; it is, no doubt, a ſecret between heaven and him.

Great God! continued Formoſo, can this inhuman father, when he came to know his daughter's condition, feeling his honour deeply hurt, in the madneſs of indignation and grief,—can he have——— I dare ſay no more. This dreadful maddening thought ſtill haunts me in the deſart. I may, then, have been the occaſion of the murder of that innocent maid! the occaſion of a parricide! Ah! my friend, can you now ſay, that this mattraſs for a couch, this ſtone for a pillow, this obſcure and lonely

lonely life are auſterities too ſevere for the guilty, proſcribed wretch who has been the author of ſo many ills?—Such is my lot; ſuch have been the conſequences of a paſſion which I thought ſo laudable, ſo virtuous, till the fatal moment when I was inextricably involved, as it were, in the meſhes of guilt.

Franciſco, upon his father's death, left Seville, where he could no longer hope to be of ſervice to me, and returned hither. With his aſſiſtance I reared this cottage. He lives in his original condition, in a neighbouring hamlet, at a ſmall diſtance from me; and from time to time ſupplies me with neceſſaries for the maintenance of a life, which, alas! is too ſlowly waſted away by the agonies of a juſt and bitter repentance. Thus ſpoke the Recluſe.

I ſought to perſuade him, that his misfortune might not be ſo great as his deſpondency led him to fear: that a father, by concealing his daughter might be ſuppoſed deſirous equally of hiding her ſhame and ſaving her life: that it was too ſhocking to be imagined, that even the deepeſt ſorrow, or the fierceſt indignation could ever prompt Velamara to become the murderer of his own child; and that he not only blamed him, but likewiſe blamed himſelf

ſelf unjuſtly, when he reflected upon the moſt involuntary and moſt pardonable weakneſs, as if it were the moſt heinous of crimes. Ah! Sir, ſaid he, had I nothing elſe to blame myſelf for, but her ſhame, her tears, her ſorrow, that bitterneſs of which ſhe muſt have ſo largely taſted, and that waſting languor which muſt have hurried her to the grave,—could I be a wretch, barbarous enough to forgive myſelf?

I ſaw that only the lenient hand of time could calm a heart ſo grievouſly agitated; and only begged, that he would allow one to whom he had now confided his ſorrows, to viſit him from time to time, that he might at leaſt ſtrive to ſoothe and ſhare, if he could not relieve them.

Part III.

I Was born, continued the worthy Swede, with a preſumptuous inclination to ſuppoſe myſelf capable of greater firmneſs than my friends, under misfortune, for which I blame, and yet forgive myſelf. When I am in affliction, my ſoul retires within herſelf, and I need no comforter; but when my friend ſuffers, I always fancy him in need of conſolation from me.

From

From the moment when Formoſo opened his griefs to me, I could not be eaſy, if I was not with him. And, ſometimes by extenuating the guilt of which he accuſed himſelf, ſometimes by flattering him with faint hopes, I was continually probing the wounds in his heart, and ſtriving to pour into them the healing balm of conſolation.

One day after a violent ſtorm, the ſky had reſumed its wonted ſerenity in that happy climate, and I went to ſee my ſolitary friend. I found him engaged with a young child, beauteous and handſome, as the God of Love. He had wrapped the infant in his cloak, but ſhewed it naked to me. Adonis, when nine years of age, was not ſo charming. All the graces and delicacy of infancy adorned the lovely foundling; it diſplayed the ideal perfection of the human form. I never ſaw any thing ſo divine. I viewed it with high aſtoniſhment and pleaſure.

What wonder is this, Formoſo? ſaid I. Alas! anſwered he, it is a poor peaſant's boy whom I have ſaved from drowning. *His clothes are drying before the ſun.* The ſtorm was over, but the river ſtill ſwollen. This child ſtood on the other ſide with a fiſhing rod in his hand. I had gone out, as uſual, to gather plants upon the brow of the hill.

I obſerved

I obſerved him upon the cliff of a rock which was ſtill wet with the rain. I ſaw him ſtoop anxiouſly over the water, and without thinking of his danger, follow the hook with his eyes. His foot ſlipped, he fell, and tumbled headlong into the river. The ſtream carried him down, I threw myſelf in, ſwam towards him, caught hold of him, dragged him to the ſhore, and as he was quite exhauſted and fainting, took him up in my arms, and bore him hither. When he was revived in my boſom, he eagerly thanked me, poor child! But, he is much diſtreſſed at the loſs of his line, which, he ſays, his mother had plaited for him of her own hair.

Your mother is ſurely beautiful, my little fellow? ſaid I, careſſing him.—Yes, Sir, ſaid he, ſhe is very beautiful; but pale, which I am uneaſy to ſee; for I have heard it ſaid, that paleneſs is a ſign of approaching death; and if I loſe her, I ſhall be in a piteous condition! She ſuckled me with her milk, and ſtill ſupports me.—Amiable child!—So your father is no more?—Alas! no. I never ſaw my *father; I loſt him when I was in my cradle;* I dare not ſpeak of him, for, whenever I mention him, my mother weeps.—Yonder ſhe is, calling and ſeeking for me, upon the other ſide. She is uneaſy upon my account! She lifts up her hands to heaven.

ven. She thinks me drowned. Ah! give me my clothes, quick, that I may put them on, and go out to her.

My good friend, ſaid Formoſo, your chaiſe is below; be ſo good as carry this child to his diſconſolate mother. Go, my dear child, ſaid he, return to her; love her; and do all that you can to make her eaſy.

O God! had Formoſo known, whoſe child it was, he preſſed in his arms! Had he known that the mother whom he ſaw weeping on the other ſide of the river, was Valeria, his dear Valeria! Yes, my friend, it was Valeria herſelf. It were vain to hide this from you; you muſt have perceived it already.

When the boy was dreſſed, I carried him down the hill, ſhewed him to his mother, and made a ſignal, that as the river was not fordable at that place we muſt go higher up.

When her ſon and I were ſeated in my chaiſe, I began to talk with him, and aſked his name?—Hyacinth, ſaid he.—His mother's name?—Paulina.—His father's?—Marcel.——Had his mother any property?

property?—Alas! no, ſaid he: ſhe has neither field, nor meadow, nor vineyard, not even a flock of ſheep. How do you live, then?—Upon what ſhe and our good friend earn by the labour of their hands.—Your mother has a friend, then, who lives with her?—Yes, Sir, and ſhe is a great help and comfort to my mother.—What is it they work at?—They ſpin wool and ſilk, and by way of amuſement, make the prettieſt things imaginable of ſtraw and oſiers. I begin now to be of ſome uſe to them, myſelf. I take birds with a gin; and angle for fiſhes in the river; and this is all I can yet do. But, when I ſhall be ſtronger, I hope to give my mother better aſſiſtance. I ſhall become a ſhepherd, a wood-cutter, a huſbandman; and then, Sir, I ſhall ſupport my mother in my turn.

I aſked if his mother ſeemed to be ſatisfied with her condition. He replied, that ſhe ſtrove to appear ſo; but hid herſelf at times from him, and wept with her friend. Often, even while ſhe was careſſing him, tears would ſilently trickle from her eyes; ſometimes, ſhe uttered heavy ſighs, as ſhe preſſed to her lips a box of ſtraw, wrought by her own hand, and on which ſome words were written, ſaid he, that I could not underſtand; but, ſhe has promiſed that ſhe will one day explain them to me.—

Do you remember thoſe words? Yes, very well; *Loyalty, Love, and Conſtancy.*—Juſt heaven! cried I. He ſmiled at the exclamation.—A great matter to be ſurprized at, ſaid he, that a boy of my age ſhould remember three words! What would you ſay, if I ſhould repeat to you the ſtory of little Moſes, that of Iſaac, and that of Joſeph, all of which I have by heart: and above all, that of poor little Iſhmael, which my mother can never hear without weeping over me? All theſe, however, I know.

Every word the child ſpoke, continued to confirm what the mention of Formoſo's device had ſuggeſted. Yet, as in the ſpirit of Spaniſh gallantry, this device was in no wiſe ſingular, or even rare, it was but an equivocal token: and, as I proceeded with my little charge, I began to conſider, by what means I might beſt clear up this myſterious affair, and yet ſuffer nothing to drop from me which might betray my friend's ſecret. If it be ſhe, ſaid I to myſelf, I muſt perſuade her to confide in me; and if it be not ſhe, I muſt beware of letting her know any thing reſpecting myſelf.

As we proceeded up the bank of the river, in ſearch of a ford, I ſaw the tender mother advancing up the oppoſite ſide, to meet us. I croſſed the

the river; and when I put her ſon in her arms; Ah! Sir, you reſtore me to life. And by what accident did my ſon croſs the river? The child then told her himſelf what had happened. I was almoſt drowned, ſaid he, when a wild man, of a frightful aſpect, but of great goodneſs of heart, plunged into the water, to ſave me, carried me out, bore me fainting to his cottage, and did all to recover me, that he could have done, if I had been his own child. It is at his deſire, that this good gentleman has brought me to you. And, does he refuſe me the pleaſure of expreſſing my thanks to himſelf! He is ſomewhat averſe to ſocial intercourſe, ſaid I. Can ſo good a man be ſo? returned ſhe. Should one refuſe to ſee thoſe to whom one has done ſo much ſervice? I live a ſolitary life, as well as he; yet I ſhould be pleaſed to have an opportunity of making my acknowledgements to a perſon who has ſaved my ſon. Good woman, ſaid I, he ſhall know your wiſh; he will feel for your uneaſineſs; and he and I (for I ſee him often; we are both botaniſts); yes, he ſhall come with me, to ſee you. In the mean time, permit me to accompany you to your cottage. My chaiſe ſhall wait at the foot of the hill.

Confounded and embarraſſed by my offer, ſhe begged me to come no farther. I endeavoured by

gentle ſolicitation, to obtain her permiſſion. I can hardly prevail with myſelf to leave my little friend, ſaid I. This lovely boy intereſts me much. He was not born to live thus in the obſurity of a cottage. I will venture to foretell to him a nobler deſtiny. Yes, I dare venture to promiſe his mother, that he will, one day, be a glory and a happineſs to her.

Glory was not made for us, anſwered ſhe, drooping her head; I can never know other happineſs than that which is to be found in peaceful ſolitude. —Why? ſaid I; *Hope is the companion of courage.* At hearing theſe words, ſhe ſtarted. And, know you continued I, what heaven intends your ſon, if he ſhall prove himſelf ready to *do all for glory, and for love?* Her emotion increaſed; theſe words ſeemed to work upon her mind like a magical incantation.

Sir, ſaid ſhe, my ſon inſpires you with ſentiments in his behalf, and you ſpeak a language to myſelf, at both of which I am alike ſurprized. Since you inſiſt upon accompanying me to my cottage, I muſt beg you to ſay what makes you thus overlook the humble condition in which you ſee me. I replied that one needed only to ſee her and hear her talk, in order to know that ſhe was not at preſent in her natural and proper ſituation.

In

In Spain, replied ſhe, the air and manners of the city and the village, differ ſo ſlightly, that thoſe of the one may often be miſtaken for thoſe of the other. Even in misfortune, and humble circumſtances, man here retains much of his native dignity. Yes, this I have obſerved, ſaid I; but never ſo fully as at this very moment.

Indeed ſhe received me under her humble roof with the ſame dignified politeneſs as if it had been the palace of Velamara. Not with pride, for pride is levelled by misfortune; nor yet with penitent humility; but with a ſimple, mild, and modeſt ſpirit which ſeemed to yield to misfortune, without ſinking under it. It was a ray of light ſtill ſhining in an eclipſe.

In her little cottage, poverty wore an air of neatneſs. The furniture was all the ſimpleſt that might be imagined; but every thing was ſcrupulouſly kept clean. Her friend who lived with her, behaved with an air of equality which ſeemed to be rather aſſumed than natural: the reſpect with which ſhe was impreſſed, appeared through the familiarity of her language, and the freedom of her manners. Nor did Valeria any better diſguiſe her own ſuperiority: I could diſtinguiſh the lady and her waiting-

maid, even by the care they took to hide the diſtinction. Urſula was the name of Paulina's friend. But Urſula might poſſibly be Thereſa: and in order to be fully ſatisfied with reſpect to both, I had only to deſcribe them to Formoſo. But, it was not yet time to acquaint him with the affair; he was in danger; love might again betray and ruin him. It was wiſer to perſuade the mother of Hyacinth to confide to me the true ſtate of her circumſtances and character.

When we were alone, pardon, ſaid ſhe, the curioſity which makes me deſirous of knowing who you are, and whence you come, and what adventure has brought you among theſe hamlets?

I replied, without ſeeking to feign any unreal pretext, that being an ambaſſador from the Court of Sweden to the Spaniſh Court, I had availed myſelf of the ſituation, and come to ſurvey thoſe beautiful provinces; and ſpeaking of my country, among us, ſaid I, *Loyalty, Love and Conſtancy* inſpire all hearts. The new ray of light which my repetition of theſe words ſeemed to throw upon her ſituation was too much for her. Ah! Sir, ſaid ſhe, you repeat words which you have heard from my ſon!—It is true, anſwered I, he told me, that he had read them upon

upon a box, curiouſly wrought. But, he did not tell me what was in the box; and yet, I think, that I know; for, we of the north have all ſomewhat of a prophetic ſpirit in us. You amuſe yourſelf with exciting my anxiety, replied ſhe: I am ſurpriſed, that one who has ſo much of the appearance of a diſpoſition to ſympathize in the misfortunes of others, ſhould take a pleaſure in giving pain. Ah! may the puniſhment of heaven overtake me, ſaid I, if I have ever ſought to add one drop of bitterneſs, to ſwell the cup of the unfortunate. No, I am incapable of ſuch barbarous impiety. I ſhould reſpect misfortune, even although it appeared in company with guilt. How much more then, when it has fallen upon virtue and innocence! when the candour and conſtancy of a ſoft, a tender, and an ingenuous heart concur to intereſt me in it! Ah! cried ſhe, this weak and tender heart is known to you; I am betrayed!—No, ſaid I, fear not, you are not betrayed.—Well! ſaid ſhe, only tell me what you ſuppoſe the box to contain.—I ſee in it ſacred characters, but I ſee likewiſe marks of blood.—— O God! my ſecrets are all divulged.—No, Madam, they are not; they are locked under an agate, and faſtened down with a lock of that fine hair.—So you know all. Ah! if he be known to you, who

is

is the ſole depoſitory of the ſecret of my ſoul, does he know where I am? Has he ſent you hither? Where is he? Is he ſafe?

Madam, you and I have equally ſecrets to communicate to one another. And I am almoſt ſure, that our ſecrets are both the ſame. But, as your's is in your own power, and mine, for a ſimilar reaſon, is not in my power; it remains with you, to explain yourſelf firſt. I ſhould be blameable, if I were to make the firſt diſcoveries. You muſt prevent me.

Well! ſaid ſhe, trembling, what would you know? —Your name?—Valeria—and his?—Don Maurice. —Your companion is then Thereſa?—The ſame.—Enough. Deſpair not of ſeeing him again.—Ah! has he yet eſcaped the ſeverity of the laws? where have you left him? knows he the place of my retreat? ——He knows nothing; he is yet a fugitive, and threatened by the arm of juſtice; the leaſt indiſcretion on your part might ruin both him and yourſelf; and I dread the indiſcretions of love. Remain here, hid from the world; and let the paſſionate, the moſt faithful of lovers, continue in his place of exile, without learning that you are here. While I exert myſelf to ſave and ſerve you both, I am

anxious,

anxious, that you may remain safe from one another. I shall bring you together, at a proper time. But, tell me, that I may inform him, by what miracle did you escape, as well as he, from the horrors which threatened you?

You, no doubt, know, said she, in what condition he left me. If the infection of vice had, but for a moment stained the soul of Valeria, if she could only have foreseen the danger to which she should be exposed by the delirium of grief and love; she would not now dare to meet the eye of a man acquainted with her misfortune. But, in your eyes, a failing so involuntary cannot appear criminal in your eyes; at least, it is not so in mine. While I blame myself for an act of weakness for which I have suffered so much, my conscience acquits my heart of guilt. My heart amidst all its sorrows has never been stung with remorse. I blush not at the name of mother. I know with what harshness my reputation may have been treated in the world: elopement and flight are facts from which the world judges; the world may have thought me guilty, and I complain not of their severity; but, of my heart none can judge, save heaven, my lover, and myself.

I,

I, anſwered I, am not a man to condemn a ſoul, ſo exalted, and amiable. Before me, the mother of Hyacinth, the miſtreſs of Formoſo needs not to wear a bluſh of ſhame.

You know not, reſumed ſhe, the iſſue of that combat, in which, by my father's garden-wall;—Yes, I know all that paſſed out of the palace of Velamara, till Formoſo left Seville. Well! in that palace, my brother was dying, and my father in a wild fury made vengeance his firſt care, and gave ſtrict orders to find out the murderer. I had ſeen my brother enraged at Formoſo's anſwer, when he forbade him to ſee me more, and heard him threaten to puniſh his inſolence, if he ſhould dare to make any attempt, in diſregard of this prohibition. The hour, the place, the perſons, all concurred to convince me, that Formoſo was the unknown author of thoſe unhappy events, and that he had not been the aggreſſor. They named him not, but ſpoke only of love, jealouſy, and the quarrel between the two rivals; and I was ſuſpected to have been the cauſe of that bloody conteſt. Upon this head my father thought proper to queſtion me.

Ovandes is dead, ſaid he, in a tone of the harſheſt ſeverity; your brother is wounded, perhaps mortally.

mortally. You know the hand which has done theſe miſchiefs, daughter, and you muſt confeſs all. I acknowledged all that was innocent in my conduct, concealing only my love and my frailty. He named Formoſo; I ſhewed aſtoniſhment at the thought of a quarrel between ſuch intimate friends, as my brother and Formoſo. Ah! replied he, you perhaps know too well the cauſe of their quarrel! But, tremble for what may be the conſequence if I ſhall come to the knowledge of this. Theſe dreadful words he accompained with a look ſtill more terrifying, and left me with a beating heart.

All the night, methought, I ſaw my lover before me, loaded with irons, condemned to death, and led forth to execution. I ſent to conjure him, as you may have heard, to think no more of me, but provide by flight for his own ſafety. He at laſt obeyed; and no ſooner was he gone, than my heart revived, and I was pleaſed, as if at liberty, although ſtrictly confined to my apartment, and vigilantly watched.

I was kept in this confinement, as long as my brother continued dangerouſly ill, and too weak to ſpeak ſo as to make himſelf underſtood. But, as ſoon as he was able, he gave my father a juſt and noble

noble teſtimony of the honour of Formoſo, and anſwered in the ampleſt manner for my innocence. He was permitted to ſee me; and from that time, my confinement was leſs ſtrict, and the treatment I received not ſo harſh as before: I had even liberty, ſometimes, to take the air in the garden. But, what a multitude of anxieties diſquieted my heart, all this time! Within ſeven months I was likely to become a mother. But, this was not the hardeſt circumſtance in my lot. Formoſo was going to be tried.

I ſeized a moment when I happened to be left alone by my brother's bed-ſide, and aſked whether the criminal proceſs was ſtill urged on, againſt Don Maurice. I would not ſuffer it to be carried on in my father's name, ſaid he; and he has himſelf deſiſted from the proſecution; to avoid giving riſe to reports injurious to your reputation, he would not ſuffer your brother's name to be mentioned in the indictment. Nothing was held out but the rencounter between Ferdinand and Don Maurice, and that without mentioning the cauſe. But, the Duke of Ovandes, in his deſpair for the death of his ſon, demands vengeance on the murderer, and exerts all his credit to obtain it. He has cited as witneſſes, perſons to whom Formoſo had confeſſed his guilt; and as the flight of the accuſed adds weight to the accuſation,

accuſation, there is every reaſon to fear that he will be condemned.

And, will you ſuffer the innocent to be condemned! ſaid I. Will not you raiſe your voice to declare, that Don Ferdinand, and yourſelf forced Formoſo to draw in his own defence.——Siſter, replied Leontio, if I were to avow this truth, I ſhould be obliged, at the ſame time, to divulge another, ſtill more painful. When you urge me to accuſe myſelf by declaring, that I am the aggreſſor, you ſhould conſider upon what terms I might juſtify myſelf. Be ſatisfied with ſeeing me at the gates of death: aſk me not to diſhonour you and your family. Reſpect, dread a father who will not tamely ſuffer your amours to diſgrace him. Ah! Sir, if my teſtimony could have ſerved, this threat had been vain. But, what could I have ſaid to ſave my lover? Can you conceive a ſituation more dreadful and diſtreſſing than mine? The ſentence pronounced againſt Formoſo was communicated to me. I became pale at hearing it; my blood was chilled in my veins. My father was preſent, and, no doubt, obſerved me. However, as he could not but feel ſome remorſe, himſelf, for the guilty ſilence of Leontio, he took no notice of my uneaſineſs, but, only determined to ſeparate me for ever, from a

man whoſe hand, he ſaid, he ſaw ſtill reeking with his blood.

I begged leave to retire to a convent; and my requeſt was granted. But, the convent I was to retire to, was, above all others, one in which I was likely to be guarded with the utmoſt ſtrictneſs and vigilance. How could I there bring forth the unfortunate progeny of my weakneſs? Could I flatter myſelf with the hope, that my ſhame might be concealed there? Or had I not rather reaſon to fear that, in order to conceal the diſgrace of its birth, my child would be torn from the fondneſs of its mother. ——Ah! I ſtill tremble to think of the impreſſion which the fear of this made upon my heart.

I had now only to chuſe whether I would throw myſelf upon my father's mercy, and confeſs all to him, at the riſk of my own life, and the life of the poor, innocent infant which I thought, I felt quick within me; or would rather eſcape from his fury, and by my flight ſave him the pain of long and bitter remorſe. I knew the paſſionate violence of his temper; and, more upon his account, than for my own ſake, dreaded, that in his firſt tranſports of rage, he might be hurried into ſome raſh and fatal deed.

Thereſa,

Thereſa, ſaid I to my companion, I muſt try to eſcape, at whatever riſk. Wilt thou forſake me? The good girl wept, and ſwore that nothing ſhould part us. She then contrived means, to enable us to effect our eſcape.

Her eldeſt brother, Paul Lucious was a waterman upon the river. Him we gained to our intereſts. We went out at the window of the pavilion, by a ladder of ropes which we had provided. Towards midnight, we repaired to the place where Paul was waiting for us, in his boat. He promiſed, as we ſailed down the river, that we ſhould be received at its mouth, at a place called St Lucar, by a pilot who was his friend, and would entertain us, till he could procure us a paſſage on board the firſt ſhip bound from Cadiz to Carthagena, to the laſt of which places I had ſaid, that I wiſhed to go.

We were both diſguiſed in the dreſs of ordinary women: and the obliging pilot deſcribed us as two nieces of his who were returning to their friends in Grenada.

Are you not ſurpriſed, my friend, ſaid the Count, in this part of his ſtory, that the lovers ſhould have

been thus directed, as if by ſome friendly angel, to ſeek refuge, ſo nearly in the ſame ſpot?

As we drew near to Carthagena, continued Valeria, we reflected that two fugitives, ſuch as we, might, in that city, be taken notice of, and that it were better to ſeek a place of ſecurity in ſome neighbouring village. As the veſſel moved along the coaſt, we obſerved at the bottom a delightful vale, and a ſmall village cloſe upon the ſhore. We would land here, ſaid Thereſa to the ſhipmaſter: and he, with all the complaiſance of a gallant Spaniard, immediately put out his boat, and conducted us to the ſhore.

There we began to think ourſelves more ſecure from purſuit, and thanked heaven for our deliverance. But, fear which thinks that it can never take enough of precautions, made us avoid the village. We ſtruck off towards the adjacent hills, hoping to find among them ſome ſequeſtered, ſolitary ſpot, unknown to all the world, where we might live ſecure. By the favour of heaven we found this cottage.

I ſhall not trouble you, ſaid ſhe, with a detail of the anxieties we felt. Conceive to yourſelf two doves

doves flying amidſt vultures, and you have ſome faint idea of our trepidation and ſolicitude. Habit inſenſibly fortified our timidity. Other cares tha thoſe of my preſervation ſoon came to divide my heart. I was now a mother: and my ſon hanging at my breaſt inſpired me with that courage which natural affection communicates even to the moſt timorous of birds, for the protection and defence of the young under their wings. No, there was no danger which I would not have braved in protecting my ſon: and if I had been preſent, when he fell into the river, I ſhould have plunged in, after him; I ſhould indeed have plunged into it, if I had not found him, after ſearching the hill and the vale. Judge, then Sir, what gratitude I feel for the kindneſs with which you have reſtored him to me: conceive how ardently I bleſs and revere the hermit who ſaved him from the waters at the riſk of his own life.

Madam, ſaid I, after ſo much anxiety and alarm, you may aſſure yourſelf, that ſome deity takes pleaſure to behold the conſtancy with which you bear misfortune. I am perſuaded, that you will yet be happy. I hope, that I am choſen to contribute to the accompliſhment of this happy purpoſe. Remain you here, in your ſolitary obſcurity, and confide in

my care. Your lover ſhall know all, and you ſhall ſoon be re-united.

I now returned to Formoſo, but was careful to drop no hint even, that could tempt him to croſs the valley. Only I told him, that the good woman had received her ſon, with a thouſand grateful prayers to heaven for him who had ſaved his life. Her prayers, added I, will ſurely be anſwered; for heaven ſeldom fails to hear the prayers of gratitude. I muſt now leave you for ſome time, my friend, an unforeſeen and urgent affair calls me to Seville; but I have not yet travelled through either Murcia or Valentia; and I hope, therefore that I ſhall ſoon be with you again.

At Seville, ſaid Formoſo, you may perhaps meet with the good father of whom I have ſpoken to you. He is called father Athanaſius. See him; and without telling him where I am, let him know, that I ſtill live, and have not forgotten his kindneſs. Above all, enquire, if he can yet give me any information concerning the fate of Valeria.

Wonderful is the concatenation of the events of human fate! All the pains I had intended to take, and the meaſures I had concerted to employ at Se-

ville, and at Madrid, in behalf of our two lovers; the whole plan which I had marked out for my conduct; the means by which I purpoſed to ſoften the implacable enemies of Formoſo,—all were cut ſhort by theſe words; Go, ſee father Athanaſius.

Ah! what joy! what comfort you bring me! ſaid the good old man, when he heard me pronounce the name of Maurice! Why cannot I alſo learn whether Valeria be yet in the world! But, alas, no ſhe is no more! I aſſured him, that ſhe was ſtill alive. Merciful God! I adore thy goodneſs! ſaid he in a tranſport. I ſhall then have the happineſs to ſee them united, before I die.—What is it you ſay, father?—I ſay, that theſe two hearts by whoſe mutual tenderneſs I have been ſo much intereſted in their behalf, ſhall, at laſt obtain the reward of their conſtancy. I have already procured the family of Velamara, to ſolicit the revocation of the ſentence againſt Formoſo; and Leontio has declared himſelf the aggreſſor. Alas! the unhappy Leontio has long been tortured with remorſe for having withheld his teſtimony in behalf of innocence:—and his father, now bending towards the grave, blames himſelf for having enjoined his ſon to maintain upon that occaſion, a guilty ſilence. They both accuſe themſelves for driving Valeria to deſpair,

pair, by the unjuſt ſentence againſt her lover; but they cannot learn what is become of her. In Seville it is doubted whether her father has ſhut her up in a convent; or did not perhaps in his wrath kill her with his own hand. Some ſuppoſe that ſhe was drowned in the river; others, that ſhe made her eſcape, and was carried off by her lover. But, ſorrow and mourning have ever ſince prevailed in the palace of Velamara. I was at length called in; and the father and ſon both conjured me with the utmoſt earneſtneſs, and in deep humiliation, to tell them, if I knew where were Formoſo and Valeria, I anſwered, that I knew nothing of them. The father was confounded, and overpowered with affliction.

I was unjuſt, ſaid he, and forced my ſon to ſhare my guilt. I wiſh, if poſſible, to expiate my crimes, before I die. I am accuſed of having imbrued my hands in the blood of my own daughter. But of this act of cruelty I was never capable. Yet, have I deſerved to ſuffer by the blackeſt calumny; ſince I have myſelf permitted the innocent to be calumniated and condemned as guilty. Tears here ſtopped his voice.

It is I who am guilty, ſaid Leontio, in ſtill greater agony; I took a fooliſh and inhuman pleaſure in kindling in the breaſt of my friend and my ſiſter, the love which has undone them. I favoured its progreſs, and was even diverted to obſerve it: I was their confident, and, without my father's knowledge, but in hopes that he might conſent to their marriage, complaiſantly encouraged their growing fondneſs for each other. But, ſoon after, when a richer and more ſplendid match offered, I coldly rejected my friend whom I ſhould have ſoothed and pitied. He was hurt at my cold indifference; and expreſſed what he felt with a degree of warmth by which I was offended. In conſequence of this, I took part with his rival, who being enraged to find himſelf ſlighted by my ſiſter, ſought an opportunity of revenge upon the cauſe. At laſt, I who had met him as the ſecond of Ferdinand, who had been myſelf the aggreſſor, who was conſcious of Formoſo's innocence,—I ſuffered him to be condemned, proſcribed, and deprived of his property: I have given a mortal wound to the heart of her who, but for me, had never known him, and who loved him only as the generous man whoſe valour had ſaved my life. Where ſhall we find them? Where are they? Muſt I die before I can repair the wrongs I have

have done them? Such was the narrative of Athanaſius.

O my friend! I ſaw at this moment, of what importance it is to man, to be convinced that there is on high, an inviſible witneſs of his actions, who will, one day, be his judge.

Go, ſaid I to the good old man, go, tell them there is a man in Seville who brings conſolation to their ſorrows. I am the Count de Creutz, the Swediſh ambaſſador to the Spaniſh Court. I know where Maurice Formoſo is; and I know equally the place of Valeria's concealment. Tell them ſo.

You will naturally ſuppoſe, that they aſked to ſee me immediately. But, I prevented their wiſhes. Never ſaw I two faces bear a deeper impreſſion of the affliction produced by remorſe.

Is it true, Sir? aſked the old Marquis of Velamara. Is my daughter ſtill alive? I aſſured him, that ſhe was.—She, no doubt followed the unfortunate Formoſo? No, ſhe knows not even the place of his retreat. Ah! Sir, cried the old man at theſe words, my daughter was innocent, then!—She is more, ſaid I; ſhe is virtuous; there is nothing under

der heaven more reſpectable than Valeria in her diſtreſs. I ſpeak not of Formoſo; the greatneſs and generoſity of his mind are already known to you. Misfortunes have only ſerved to exalt his character with new virtues.

Well! Sir, ſaid Leontio, tell me where he is; and I will fall at his feet, if he is not yet ſo generous as to receive me in his arms.

Gentlemen, ſaid I, let the ſentence pronounced upon him firſt be annulled: the duke of Ovandes muſt be brought to conſent——Ovandes lives not to oppoſe it, ſaid Velamara. And he even forgave him on his death-bed.

Thus I ſaw the ſtorm which had lowered over the fortune of Formoſo diſpelled, in a manner, by a ſingle blaſt. The ſentence againſt him was annulled; his confiſcated eſtate was reſtored. The honour of the name of Formoſo was fully cleared. All that now remained, was to recommend Hyacinth to their kindneſs. But this was not my buſineſs. I left to nature, an advocate, much more ſkilful and eloquent then I, the care of ſoliciting for him.

As ſoon as the act of abrogation was put into my hands, I aſked only time to bring back Valeria and Formoſo, and went inſtantly to find them.

Here, my friend, you undoubtedly expect an intereſting *recognition*; and indeed, with my ſolitary botaniſt on the one hand, and my good ſpinſter with young Hyacinth, on the other, I might eaſily have produced a fine theatrical incident. But, it would have been cruel to expoſe two minds, ſo much worn out with anxiety and ſorrow to the overpowering agitation of ſuch a ſudden guſh of joy. Comfort, and peace were what they both wanted moſt, after ſo many ſufferings.

Inſtead of preparing for a new ſcene of mutual aſtoniſhment, between them, at their meeting, I took pains to ſoften at leaſt to the tender hearted Valeria, the force of a ſtroke which ſhe might have proved unable to bear. I had, at firſt, encouraged her to hope; by the time of my return, thoſe hopes which I had cheared her, had almoſt died away. I now ſtrove to revive them. I repreſented a change in her lover's fortune, firſt as a thing poſſible, and then, as not improbable. The effects of injuſtice, I told her, were never permanent; truth might be eclipſed for a moment, but ſoon burſt out with redoubled

doubled luſtre. In heaven, and even in the hearts, there was one armed to vindicate and avenge innocence, whoſe wrath could be appeaſed by nothing but the fulleſt expiation.

When theſe ſuggeſtions ſeemed to ſhed ſome rays of comfort over the darkneſs of her mind, I then proceeded to ſpeak with greater confidence. I went even ſo far as to promiſe, that Leontio and her father ſhould make reparation for the act of injuſtice which they had been guilty of, and that even Ovandes would not carry his reſentment down with him, to the grave. And, who knows, added I, whether heaven which has diſpoſed theſe things for his advantage, may not alſo have preſerved Formoſo, at no great diſtance from us, to receive the benefit of one of thoſe ſtrange, events proceeding from natural cauſes, which appear miraculous only becauſe they could not be foreſeen?

Alas! Sir, ſaid Valeria, how can you take pleaſure to mock me by ſuggeſting ſuch vain and illuſory ideas? ſuch dreams can never make me happy. No —But, why, ſaid I, ſhould you ſuppoſe, that theſe may not be realities? What I foreſee is ſo ſimple a matter, that I ſhould ſcarcely be ſurpriſed, if I were to find the wild man who ſaved your ſon to be no

other than Formoſo himſelf.——What, Sir, that wild man!—She could ſpeak no more; ſo ſtrong was yet the emotion, which I had tried to extenuate.—Yes; that wild man; and why not? Why, if Formoſo ſtill lives, may he not be concealed there? All the wonder would be that the place of his retreat ſhould have happened to be ſo near your's; but, there is nothing wonderful in two cottages ſtanding near each other.—What, Sir, can this be poſſible? can it be true?—Undoubtedly, it is poſſible—it is even true.——Good God! Juſt God! my ſon! my ſon! cried ſhe in wild agitation.——Come! thy father lives; thou haſt ſeen him. Sir! pardon me; but I tremble, I dare not yet——Is it true? What! this vale, only this vale between us! Does he know?—No, he knows nothing of the matter; he knows not that you are alive, that his ſentence has been revoked, and his fortune reſtored. He knows not, that your father conſents to your union. All this is true, and we muſt inform him of it.

With whatever caution I had made this diſcovery, yet had it the effects which I had foreſeen upon her. Her aſtoniſhment roſe higher, at every word; her hands ſhook; all the frail ſprings of a frame naturally delicate, and waſted by ſorrow, received a ſhock: I ſaw her very veins throb; her eyes ſeemed

ed to become dim; and ſhe would have ſunk down in a ſwoon, had I not revived her by ſaying, *Let us go ſee him.* At theſe words, ſhe ſuddenly recovered ſtrength, took her ſon by the hand, and cried, Let us go ſee him. The mother, the ſon, and I went down the hill, and croſſing the river in my carriage, ſoon reached the oppoſite ſide of the vale.

He was gone out to botanize. Valeria and her ſon were almoſt breathleſs with anxiety. Here, ſaid I, is his habitation. Reſt here, till I call him in.

Ah! you who accuſe me of exaggerating whatever I attempt to deſcribe, teach me how to expreſs the overpowering emotions of tenderneſs, or rather the delirium of love and compaſſion with which Valeria was affected when ſhe ſaw in how poor and humble a condition her lover had been reduced to live, for nine whole years. This turf-built cot, this fern-covered roof, this mat, and that cold ſtone on which he has laid his head!——There it was, he groaned, and deſpaired of ever ſeeing me more. She kneeled down, and wept over his bed. Her child ſtrove to comfort her, and wept with her. Ah! mother, ſaid he, is this a time for weeping, when we are to embrace my father?

I now wandered backwards and forwards, calling on him, not by name, but only by loud cries, which were re-echoed from the mountain-ſides.

He heard me, and came towards me. When I ſaw him approach, I advanced to meet him: Embrace and congratulate me, ſaid I. I have ſucceeded in my errand to Seville. You are no longer in danger. Here is the act by which all the rights of honour and innocence are reſtored to you. Your fortune is reſtored. He took me in his arms, and preſſed me to his heart. Generous friend, ſaid he, how greatly am I indebted to you! You reſtore me life, liberty, honour, and even that fortune which I had forgotten. But, who ſhall give me back Valeria? added he, in a tone of the deepeſt ſorrow. Who ſhall reſtore her?—I, anſwered I.—You, my friend!—If I cannot, what avails any thing I have already done for you? At hearing theſe words, his joy burſt out. Come, ſaid I, none of this weakneſs. Don Maurice, ſhew the ſame fortitude in bearing joy, which has ſuſtained you under ſorrow. I deſire not that you ſhould ſhew yourſelf inſenſible to the pleaſure of knowing that Valeria is yet alive, is a mother, has a ſon as beauteous as herſelf; that you are immediately to ſee them both; that Leontio's friendſhip is reſtored to you; and that her father wiſhes

wiſhes you to become the huſband of Valeria; all this muſt, no doubt, affect you with an agreeable ſurpriſe; but, in all ſituations in life, a great ſoul remains always maſter of itſelf.

What call you, a great ſoul, ſaid he, like a man diſtracted. Half of theſe prodigies, the happineſs barely of again ſeeing my wife and my child, if real or poſſible, were enough to raiſe my joy to the higheſt pitch of extravagance; I ſhould become mad in their arms. I had better have left you your good ſenſe, your vigour, and your courage, then, ſaid I. Ah! my friend, torture me no longer with this uncertainty: and if heaven has wrought ſo many miracles for me, convince me that it is ſo; carry me to my wife, and my child. They are not far off, ſaid I, we ſhall inſtantly ſee them. Follow me. He followed, like a man abſolutely diſtracted, and out of himſelf.

O God! what an interview! I had done, you ſee, what was poſſible to calm the emotions of joy and ſurpriſe upon both ſides. Yet, I feared that I ſhould ſee them both expire, when Formoſo entering his cottage, ſaw Valeria kneeling on his mat, kiſſing it, and weeping over it: and when ſhe, at the piercing

cry which he uttered, turned ſuddenly about, and lifted up her eyes upon him.

She became inſenſible. The tears, cries, kiſſes, and careſſes of Hyacinth brought her to life and ſenſe again. I, bearing up in my arms, the brave man, who had borne and ſurmounted ſo much, yet was ready to die of joy, did all I could to ſave his life. The tide was too ſtrong for him; he ſcarcely breathed; and his breathing was interrupted by heavy ſobbings. At laſt, tears of love, of bliſsful happy love, opened a paſſage for themſelves, and he wept over the mat. It was a quarter of an hour, before either could ſpeak. I ſhall try to repeat their words. They repeated each other's names, the name of the child, my name, and uttered ſome ardent expreſſions of gratitude and love to heaven, and to that beneficent God who had taken pity upon them. Ah! believe me, this is the only eloquence of the higher paſſions.

I carried them back to Seville. Formoſo went firſt with me and the pious father to embrace Leontio, and kneel before the Marquis. You have forgiven my misfortunes, ſaid he; but this is not all, it is not enough; you muſt alſo forgive a crime, pardon a moment of delirium which has been followed

lowed by nine years of bitterneſs and remorſe, of ſolitude and ſuffering. Heaven itſelf is diſarmed, and pardons me, ſince Valeria and my ſon are at length reſtored. O my father! O my brother! Imitate the mercy of that God who hath taken pity upon me: pardon me, like him. A word from Valeria's father, pronounced before the altar, will reconcile honour, nature, and love.

Remorſe had humbled the haughtineſs of the Velamara's, and extinguiſhed their hatred and reſentment. But, although they had been differently minded, the ſuppliant air of Don Maurice, and the affecting nature of his prayer, enforced as it was by the tone of his voice, his look, his tears, muſt have ſoftened their hearts. Yet, their ſilence ſhewed the confuſion of mind which they felt. But, when Valeria, with her lovely boy came in, caſt herſelf at her father's feet, and wept before him, every emotion then gave place to the feelings of natural affection in every breaſt. Nature juſtified all; and methought I ſaw her enfold together in her arms the relenting father and his grateful, happy children. The vows of love were immediately ſanctified before the altar.

THE

THE VILLAGE BREAKFASTS;

OR, ADVENTURES OF INNOCENCE.

FIRST BREAKFAST.

The Window.

I HAD for a neighbour in the country a little old woman, of an agreeable temper, and a figure which ſtill diſplayed every mark of beauty. Her complexion was paſt its flower; her cheek no longer ſhewed the down of the peach, but had ſtill the ſmoothneſs and ſomewhat of the vermillion of a pine-apple preſerved through winter. Her features were ſtill animated and expreſſive; even her eyes ſtill ſparkled; young women might have envied the alluring ſweetneſs of her ſmiles. By her gaiety, her deſire to pleaſe, the marks of ſenſibility which ſhe diſcovered, and above all, by the graces of her mind and manners,—any body would have ſaid, with Fontenelle, *that, Love had paſſed here.*

She had formed a little circle of friends in the village, who went, every morning to breakfaſt with her, ſometimes in a chearful parlour, and ſometimes in a green arbour, in the open air. I was one among thoſe

thoſe friends of her's. She had a pleaſure in relating the incidents of paſt times, and we were not leſs fond to hear them.

Madam, ſaid we to her, one day, all your little ſtories charm us: but we muſt confeſs, that we ſhould hear the tale of your youth, with greater pleaſure than any other. You are not wrong, replied ſhe, for, if I choſe, I have certainly wherewith to amuſe you. But, I never talk of myſelf; for, in ſpeaking of one's ſelf, a perſon ſeems always to ſpare one's own weakneſſes; and every hearer invariably detracts from the good, and aggravates the evil told.

We all aſſured, that we would moſt certainly credit whatever ſhe ſaid, and that every one of her words ſhould be held literally true. What! ſaid ſhe, will you never be tempted to ſuppoſe ſomething concealed in my ſtory, and to ſupply from your fancy what ſeems wanting?—No, never.—— And, will you keep the ſecret while I live?—Yes, while we live.—Oh, no, ſaid ſhe, it would be too much to require that; I may, at leaſt allow, that when you come to my time of life, you ſhall, each of you relate to his friends what good Madame de Cloſan told you of the follies of her youth. But,

I warn

I warn you before hand, that the ſtory is rather long, that I muſt pauſe occaſionally as I proceed in it, and that it will amuſe us at three or four breakfaſts. So much the better, ſaid we. She filled out our tea, and began her ſtory.

I was born for riches, which I knew not of. My father having been an active and ſucceſsful merchant, had amaſſed a great fortune in his port folio. I was but an infant, at the time of his death; and my mother was dead before him: and I remained, as commonly happens in ſuch caſes, at the mercy of an uncle, who was my tutor, and of an aunt, his wife, two devout folks, but covetous, and that of my property, no leſs than of the property of any perſon elſe. I need not tell you, that, as their avarice made them grudge themſelves the neceſſaries of life, they were equally ſparing to me.

Their firſt thought was, that if I were to know of my fortune too ſoon, this alone, in ſpite of all their cares, would ſpoil me. This was wiſe foreſight: but their prudence went too far; and to render me more docile, and keep me more dependent they made me believe, that my parents had left nothing. Of all my mother's toys, this little golden heart was the only one they gave me. They concealed

ed my father's fortune with equal care. Thus was I made to ſuppoſe myſelf an object of compaſſion to thoſe relations whoſe ward I was; and never was a ward more harſhly dealt with.

Till I was ſixteen years of age, I never ſaw daylight except through my window. But, at the age of ſixteen, this window ſhewed me ſomething dearer than ſight; a young and handſome notary's clerk, who before ſitting down to his deſk in the morning uſed to come to take air for a few moments, at an oppoſite window, having his fine fair hair, careleſsly put up with a comb, but hanging moſtly looſe upon his ſhoulders.—You might ſuppoſe him Apollo in a cotton morning-gown: Such was my clerk, from the firſt moment, he was mine; he was ſo all his life; and I am now his widow. I am anticipating, but I have a reaſon for it.

At the firſt ſight of him, all thoſe confuſed ſenſations which I had begun to feel, were explained, the liſtleſſneſs of my ſolitary life, my roving reveries, the reſtleſsneſs which purſued me in my ſleep. I thought, I ſaw what was wanting to my happineſs. But, the Court which intervened, although narrow, was an abyſs between us. But, our eyes were not to be reſtrained by it.

His

His ſurpriſe, his emotion, and the rapture which he felt at the firſt ſight of me were too ſtrong to be concealed. Nor could he avoid perceiving the emotion with which I was at the ſame time affected; for it was involuntary, and I had not time to think; yet, I am ſure, it was timid, at leaſt, and mixed with that modeſty which is inſtinctively the companion of innocence. That modeſty warned me, that I ought not to remain longer at the window, oppoſite to a young man who ſeemed to gaze upon me with pleaſure. I retired, and walked through the room, and did as if I were diverting myſelf with my birds; but ſtill I returned towards the ſpot where my eye had been caught by ſo charming an object. I went, I came, I glided backwards and forwards like a ſhadow, but ſtill as I turned, noticed with a ſly glance, whether he were obſerving me. My young clerk ſtood motionleſs and in rapture, followed, and ſpoke to me with the language of his eyes, and ſeemed to reproach mine for not fixing themſelves upon him.

At laſt I had the fortitude to retire out of his ſight. But, the reſt of the day was to me all a dream from which the taſks in which I was buſied, could not rouſe me. I was under my aunt's eye, who ſeemed now to obſerve me more attentively,

and

and more ſtrictly than ever. To conceal from her my confuſion, I tried to read; but ſtill his blue eyes, and fair hair ſwam before me. She aſked an account of what I was reading, but I knew not what to ſay. I complained of a dimneſs of ſight which I had been anxious to hide from her, leſt I ſhould alarm her tenderneſs; and God knows how tender ſhe was!

The day ſeemed long, and I wiſhed for night, that I might be left alone, and in the hope that ſleep might aſſiſt and prolong my ſweet reverie. This I intreated of ſleep when I lay down; and the gentleneſs of ſleep could not refuſe my requeſt.

This was in the month of April, at the period of the renewal, of the lovely return of youth which, alas! nature might grant to us, as well as to theſe happy vegetables! but I was alſo in my ſpring, and I awaked with the firſt dawn of morn; yet my young Apollo had been more alert than I. He was waiting for me at his window. At ſight of him, ſomething whiſpered to me, that this was our rendezvous. I was aſhamed to find myſelf there, but concealed my embarraſſment by ſeeming to be merely taking a look of the morning. He however caught one of my looks which was directed upon him, and ſaluting,

ſignified by his eyes and geſtures, how much he was delighted. As there was no harm in that, I returned his ſalutation. I have ſince learned that, at the age of ſixteen or eighteen years, when a couple are agreed upon any one point, they ſoon come to an underſtanding, as to every thing elſe. I was wrong therefore, I confeſs, in returning his ſalutation.

He was pleaſed with having engaged me in this mute dialogue, and wiſhed to continue it. He laid his hand upon his breaſt, and ſignified what pleaſure he felt in breathing the freſh air. I had again the imprudence to imitate him. He became more confident, meaſured with his eye the ſpace between us, and ſeemed to groan and ſigh with ardour. I underſtood him well, but choſe not to imitate him; I even blamed myſelf for forming an acquaintance who ſeemed indeed to be well-born, but whoſe name and condition in life were both unknown to me.

For ſome mornings following, I kept myſelf cloſe, and endeavoured to buſy myſelf otherwiſe, although the object of my thoughts was ſtill the ſame. By what ſingular circumſtance in my fate had this young man come to lodge ſo near me!—But, ought I, for this, to deny myſelf the only pleaſure I have in life, the innocent pleaſure of breathing the morning

ning air, and enjoying the charms of this lovely ſeaſon? After all, where was the danger? And, what did that young man give me to underſtand, at which I had reaſon to be alarmed? He is pleaſed with ſeeing me; and that may very well be, ſaid I, conſulting my little mirrour. He perhaps wiſhes to ſee me nearer; very natural this alſo: I ſee nothing that is not kind in his regret at being at a diſtance from me. Should I leave him to think that I am afraid of him? To avoid him would be to ſhew fear, and why ſhould I fear? ——

I took courage, and next day ſhewed myſelf, with my cage in my hand which I ſet in the window, and ſeemed to buſy myſelf in giving my birds meat and freſh water. He heard them ſing, and was charmed; but viewed their cage with an attentive and jealous eye, and ſeemed to envy their lot. How could I ſee all this, at ſuch a diſtance? Ah! at the age of ſixteen, one's eyes are ſharp in ſeeing what pleaſes! I aſſumed an abſent, careleſs air; and not the ſlighteſt ſhade of the ſentiments with which I inſpired *him eſcaped me; his anxiety, his impa*tience, his reproachful glances when I came too late, and his timid gratitude, when I lent attention to him;—nothing of all this eſcaped me. A month was *thus happily paſſed*, without either too great

boldneſs on his ſide, or too much of complaiſance or vigour on mine.

At length, on the firſt of May, the feſtival of my ſaint, for my name is Philippina, I ſaw on my window, when I aroſe, a lovely roſe the earlieſt of the year, I believe. That inſtant, he appeared to offer it with ſo tender an air, and ſo much grace, that I could not help thanking him. A little calendar which he had in his hand, and of which he reſpectfully kiſſed the leaf that bore my name, ſhewed that he had found means to learn that name. I was leſs fortunate, for I knew not his. I bowed, to ſhew him, that he was not wrong, but that my name was truly Philippina, and that ſaint Philip's day was my feſtival. I then ſaw him aſſume new animation, preſs his right hand upon his heart, and then wave it towards me, with the air of making an offering, while with his left, raiſed, he ſeemed to call heaven to witneſs the offering he made. I felt my own heart beat quicker than uſual; my cheeks glowed; my eyes could not meet his; I covered my face with both my hands and retired. I have ſince wondered to think, that ſuch mute language ſhould ſpeak more powerfully, and convey meaning quicker than words: for, if Cloſan had ſpoken to me, he would hardly have dared to paſs from

from the praiſe of my beauty to a confeſſion of the impreſſion it had made upon him ſo very immediately; and I had been warned never to lend an ear to the flattering language of men. But, how could flattery or falſehood be ſuſpected in the expreſſion of the countenance? How ſhould it be ſuppoſed that tender and ſuppliant eyes can deceive? The tongue it is that deceives; but we were ſilent.

It was very clear, however, that he had given me his heart, and pledged his faith to me; and if I continued to ſee him, I ſhould alſo pledge mine. Alone, at my age, without the conſent, without the knowledge even of my relations, thus to hold an interview with a young ſtranger who perhaps ſported with my innocence! All this gave me uneaſineſs; and I almoſt reſolved to ſhut my window. A very wiſe reflexion occurred to divert me from the reſolution. I have accepted nothing but his noſegay, ſaid I to myſelf; as to his other preſents, I have not, indeed refuſed, but neither have I accepted them. And why ſhould I refuſe them, if they are not unworthy of me? Heaven perhaps deſtines him for my huſband. If he be made for me, let me allow him hopes of obtaining me, and time to demand me from my friends. He knows ſurely upon whom I depend. Let me maintain a degree

of reſerve with him; yet, if I appear amiable in his eyes, why ſhould I complain of that. Alas! I have much need to pleaſe. Who would marry ſo poor a girl, if not in love with her. Thus did love encourage me. Ah! how dangerous love, when he pretends to reaſon!

Having laid down this wiſe plan for my conduct, I continued to ſee him, without farther diſtruſt either of him, or of myſelf. His firſt care, every morning, when he awaked, was to water my noſegay. He exhaled its fragrance; he counted the roſes which were full blown, and called me to remark thoſe which were only half-open, and the buds which were juſt beginning to bloſſom. He fixed his eyes upon them with an air of fondneſs; and I ſmiled to ſee him take, every day, ſo much pains about them: and each day, without being ſenſible of it myſelf, I turned my eyes more frequently, more freely, and more confidently to meet his. One day, I was forgetting to turn them from him, and I know not what ſudden emotion they occaſioned him to feel; but he put his lips to one of my roſes, and blew towards me, the kiſs he had given it. You may well think that I was not to leave this piece of audacity unpuniſhed, I inſtantly retired, and determined not to appear again for the

next eight days. Eight days! ah! my friends, was not this an effort of courage!

I muſt tell you all. Although I hid myſelf from his ſight, I could ſtill ſee him; I obſerved him from behind the window-curtain which I ſometimes kept half-open. On the two firſt days, I ſaw him water the roſe-buſh, as uſual, with a mournful languid air, while it ſeemed to ſympathize in his melancholy. After looking long upon it, and turning his eyes an hundred times in vain towards my inexorable window, he went away, at laſt, like a rejected ſuppliant. But, on the third day, the poor culprit ſank under his puniſhment; he watered the roſe-buſh with his tears, tore away the roſe on which he had impreſſed his lips, with the offending kiſs, ſhut the window; and I ſaw him no more.

After two days, a man in black appeared in his place, with a cane in his hand, and walking up and down in the chamber. Ah! ſaid I to myſelf, this is a phyſician; he is ill, and I am the cauſe! I was now afflicted, and hateful to myſelf, and blamed my own cruelty and injuſtice. How ſhould I remedy the evil which I had done? How acquaint him, that I was ſenſible of it? I found out a way.

The

The man in black came back twice, that day. I watched the moment when he was at the window, and with an air of affliction, bowed to him. He returned my bow, without knowing who I was; and I ſaw him return to his patient, to aſk. This was all I deſired.

The young man did not ſatisfy him; but no ſooner was he left alone, than he aroſe, and came to ſee me himſelf. His features were pale and altered. I believe, I expreſſed my uneaſineſs rather too ſtrongly. He told me of his illneſs by putting his hand to his pulſe, then laying it on his brow, and then preſſing it upon his heart. Then caſting a melancholy look upon the roſe-tree, he kneeled, and holding up his claſped hands, aſked my pardon. This would have ſoftened a rock. I was moved to tears, and he ſaw me wipe them away. Judge how high his joy! But, I made a ſign to him to go and reſt himſelf, and that he might do ſo, I retired from his ſight. This viſit was of more ſervice to him than that of his phyſician; for, within a few days he was in a fair way of recovery.

From this time he was as timid as he had been raſh before. I, for my part, was fearful and diffident; for I ſtill thought of the kiſs blown through the

the air, from the one window to the other; I had it on my lips; and I did all I could to hinder my eyes from gaining me another. Would I have puniſhed the offer of another with equal cruelty? This, thank heaven! is what neither you nor I can know. My heart was not put to another trial of this ſort. But, the next trial was more dangerous and my rigour did not hold equally out.

I have told you, that I ſcarcely ever went out. One fine day, however, my guardians took it into their heads to walk to *Cours-la-Reine*. The bowling green was the only place of amuſement that my tutor indulged himſelf in viſiting. Three hours, ſaid he, may be paſſed more agreeably there than at the opera; and it coſts nothing. While he gratified his taſte for this innocent pleaſure, my aunt and I walked ſlowly on through the alleys, till a woman came up to us, with a beautiful little bitch which ſhe aſked me to purchaſe. I was tempted to aſk the price; but my aunt, at the very firſt interrupted the bargain, and ſent away the merchant.

I felt it hard to be refuſed ſuch a trifle. But, poor as I imagined myſelf to be, I had no right to complain, when they ſought to be frugal of the little money

money which they gave me. I took patience, therefore, and retired in ſilence, although diſſatisfied.

But, when I returned home, great was my ſurprize to ſee my little ſpaniel ſpring out of the porter's lodge, with a roſe-coloured collar about its neck, from which hung a little bell! I took it up, and kiſſed it: and the porter to whom my aunt put ſome queſtions, honeſtly replied, that a poor woman had brought the little creature, and had ſaid, that it was for me. My aunt grumbled, and I left her to ſuppoſe that I had ſecretly paid for it.

Suppoſe me then alone in my chamber, with my little ſpaniel, and thinking what name I ſhould give her. In the folds of the ribbon of her little collar I found a ſmall billet I opened it, and read theſe words: *I am called Floretta, and he, Hyppolitus Cloſan.* Ah! it is he, ſaid I, it is he, no doubt, who having obſerved me on the walk, and ſeen my deſire to be miſtreſs of this little creature, has made me a preſent of it. I was not wrong. I have ſince learned, that he had made this uſe of the only louis d'or he had in the world. That louis d'or was worth a thouſand.

The

The little billet was incloſed within this golden heart. It is there ſtill, and ſhall ever remain there. As for the little ſpaniel, I leave you to think, whether ſhe ever ſat or ſlept, on any ſeat or any bed, but mine.

All night was I buſily contriving how to ſhew my gratitude. I was beloved,—that I was ſure of: and I wiſhed not to be thought inſenſible to the attentions of love ſo fond, ſo delicate, ſo affecting.

I was at my window by day break, Cloſan came ſoon after, and ſaw me holding my little ſpaniel to my breaſt, and kiſſing it with the greateſt tenderneſs. With an expreſſion in his countenance between pleaſure and ſadneſs, he looked firſt at me, and then at the ſpaniel, with an air ſo paſſionate, and ſo envious of its happineſs, that I knew not in what tranſport of paſſion, what neglect of reaſon, I did a very fooliſh thing. By unlucky chance, I had in my hand, my ſmall mirror, before which I was adjuſting my hair;—well, ſince I muſt tell you, I turned the mirror towards the young man, and then turning it back to myſelf, kiſſed it, and ran away.

My face now glowed, and my eyes ſwam in tears; I was overwhelmed with pain and confuſion. Now

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am I engaged for ever, ſaid I to myſelf, to this young ſtranger. I am his; I cannot now retract. —He ſaw me kiſs his image in the glaſs. After this piece of weakneſs, I am diſgraced, if I have not him for my huſband.—I was determined from this time, to have none other.

He, for his part, was tranſported with joy, while I was in this diſtreſs. In return for my kiſs, he had ſent me a thouſand others which I had not perceived. But, I know not what malignant eye had ſurprized us, and my aunt had received notice of our correſpondence.

My good guardians conſulted between themſelves, and, that very night, made me change my apartment, without ſaying, why.—I ſuſpected their reaſon, but obeyed without anſwering a word, leſt I ſhould betray myſelf.

When I was left alone in my priſon, I reflected with extreme anxiety on the ſituation my young lover was likely to be in, when he looked for me, as uſual, and I did not appear. Thus ſtrictly watched I knew not to what Saint I ſhould addreſs my prayers, to obtain conſolation for him, when I ſaw a gentleman who had an office in the revenue-department,

ment, and was ſaid to be in favour with the cardinal,—come to wait upon my uncle; and he, before he went away, aſked me in marriage for his ſon.—My young clerk himſelf ſuggeſted this project.

He had been recommended to the financier; and had been told by him that at a proper opportunity, he ſhould be very glad to ſerve him. Cloſan remembered this flattering promiſe. Deſpairing of ever ſeeing me more, and having learned that my guardian was a rich miſer, he naturally imagined that I was reſerved for ſome favourite of fortune; and ſeeing nothing but uncertain and diſtant hopes of acquiring wealth in his preſent line of employment, he reſolved to take a ſhorter and eaſier road to opulence, and went to aſk his patron to employ him in the buſineſs of the revenue. The financier taking an unfair advantage of the openneſs with which all ſuppliants reveal their uneaſineſs, drew from him the ſtory of his love by which his ambition was prompted, and aſked to know the name of the young woman with whom he was captivated. His dependent told him all, except the particulars of our correſpondence; and even gave room for ſuſpicions with reſpect to it, by avowing, that if he ſhould attain to any conſiderable

ſiderable employment, he had reaſon to ſuppoſe that he would not be rejected.

I ſhall think of it, ſaid M. de Bliancour; let me ſee you again, one of theſe mornings. The young man went away, with a grateful heart. His patron had actually the goodneſs to think of him. But, he deigned alſo to think of me. He had heard from my lover, that I was handſome. He knew not but I might be rich. He could eaſily learn what property my father had left; and a childleſs, covetous, old uncle, afforded a good proſpect. He thought that I would ſuit his own ſon; and in the firſt place, to rid him of a troubleſome rival, ſent Cloſan to a province, to ſerve his apprenticeſhip to the buſineſs of the revenue; and then waited on my uncle, to offer me the hand of the moſt ideot ſon that rich man ever had.

Only think what a difference. I ſpeak not of figure. Pleaſe God! I ſhall never think of comparing a ſhapeleſs lump to the very perfection of grace and beauty! But, as to underſtanding, ah! there was more ingenuity of thought, greater delicacy of ſentiment in a ſingle geſture of my young clerk, than in all the fooliſh gallantry of the inſipid Bliancour. But, had he poſſeſſed the wit of Fontenelle,

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it could not have gained me. I refuſed him at once; and told my uncle, that at the age of ſeventeen, one needed not to be in ſuch haſte to marry. He boaſted of my ſuitor's fortune; but, I aſſured him, that, with all his wealth, the man could never pleaſe me. Miſs muſt have a huſband to pleaſe her? ſaid my aunt peeviſhly. Well! I, for my part, am weary of watching her conduct. Let her take her choice, between marriage and a nunnery. I joyfully preferred the nunnery, hoping to find it at leaſt not quite ſo cloſe a priſon.

But, this is enough for to-day. You have had ſome comic ſcenes. To-morow's breakfaſt will be accompanied with a more ſerious tale.

SECOND BREAKFAST.

The Nunnery and the Wood.

NEXT morning when we were aſſembled in the arbour about the tea-table, our good lady thus reſumed her ſtory.

Do you believe in the influence of the ſtars? Indeed, my friends, I do; I even flatter myſelf, that I have a ſtar of my own, and you ſhall hear my

reaſons for thinking ſo. This ſtat of mine, to ruſticate me the more entirely, and the more effectually to diſconcert my young lover, (who had tried all means to ſee me which love and madneſs can contrive) determined my uncle to ſend me quietly to the abbey of Pont-aux Dames in which were relations of his.

The abbeſs gave him her word of honour, that I ſhould be inacceſſible and inviſible to all mankind: and as he depended upon her, I knew what ſhe had promiſed. My uncle had informed her, that I had ſome little love-affair in my head, of which he wanted to cure me; and love was to this abbeſs what is called *the black beaſt*. I know what miſchief he might have done her; but the poor lady could not hear his name, without ſhuddering. God help her! ſhe watched me very narrowly; but I was nothing better for this vigilance, nor yet mortified by it: for I had no means nor hopes to obtain news from the only being on earth I cared for.

He muſt have become weary, ſaid I, of looking out for me; and in deſpair of ſeeing me again, he has probably forgotten me. Alas! he has done well, then. Why cannot I alſo forget him? I had brought with me, my little ſpaniel, the only comfort

fort left me: to her I made all my complaints. I was envied this ſatisfaction; and within a few days after my arrival, the abbeſs ſignified to me, that I muſt deprive myſelf of it. Neither my intreaties, nor tears could move her, and the whole convent witneſſed my diſtreſs.

My dear little Floretta! were they going to drown thee, or only to turn thee out? Fortunately, one of my companions who felt for my grief, propoſed, to conſole me, that ſhe would ſend Floretta to her mother, and recommend the poor creature to her care. She was from Roſay, a ſmall town, near the convent; and when her mother came next to ſee her, ſhe might bring me my little ſpaniel, and I might ſometimes ſee it again. This afforded me inexpreſſible conſolation, and ſeemed a happy preſage of the event of my love. I ſent Floretta, therefore, to my friend's mother. The letter I ſent with her would have moved your heart with pity. The abbeſs herſelf was affected by it; for we might write nothing that was not ſhewn to her: this was a regulation in the convent.

Mademoiſelle de Nuiſy, (this was the young woman's name,) knew not what right ſhe had to my gratitude, or how dearly I valued the treaſure I had

intruſted to her mother. When I ſpoke of Floretta, ſighing, and with tears in my eyes, ſhe laughed at my childiſhneſs. Happy ſhe! nothing had ſhe ſeen from her window, to diſturb her heart.

You may gueſs the ſtate of mine. What was become of the unfortunate youth? What thought he of me? Did he ſtill think of me? Was he not much to be pitied, if he yet loved me? Theſe ideas haunted me, no leſs when I was aſleep, than when I was awake. And yet, the object of all my anxiety was within a few leagues of me.

He was Comptroller of the Revenue at Meaux, and as he ſuppoſed me to be ſtill in captivity in my uncle's houſe, he was inflamed, at once, with love, ambition, and eager impatience to raiſe himſelf, that he might have ſuch a fortune to offer as my relations might not think unworthy of me.

One day, at laſt, when the buſineſs of his office had brought him to Roſay, and he happened to be in one of thoſe little circles of ſociety which are formed in ſmall towns, he ſaw before one of the ladies, a ſpaniel which bore a perfect reſemblance to that which he had given me. The reſemblance attracted his notice, he praiſed its beauty, and careſſing

reſſing it, knew the bell and collar which had been bound by himſelf upon its neck. Ah! madam, cried he, earneſtly, where got you this pretty, little creature?

Madame de Nuiſy aſked nothing better than an opportunity to tell her ſtory. Alas! ſaid ſhe, I granted it entertainment out of pity. A young lady, a companion of my daughter's, had brought it with her to the convent in which they are together. The rules of the convent permitted her not to keep it. The poor child knew not to whom ſhe ſhould intruſt it, and was in great diſtreſs. My daughter has a good heart. She could not ſee her in that condition, without pitying her: and they both begged me to take care of the poor creature, which muſt otherwiſe have been turned out to be taken up by the firſt paſſenger that fancied it. Then, to render her ſtory more affecting, ſhe read my two letters, (for I had written a ſecond letter, to thank her for her hoſpitality to Floretta,) and every one was moved.

I leave you to think what impreſſion this little narrative which ſhewed what a value I ſet on his preſent, made upon my young lover. He feigned a ſmile at the innocent ſimplicity of my letters, and aſked

aſked leave to read them, himſelf. In his emotion, while his eyes were fixed upon thoſe characters traced by my hand, and he adored the ſignature of *Philippina Oray de Valſan*, upon ſeeing it now for the firſt time, he was ready to die with a deſire to preſs it to his lips. But, he reſtrained his impatience for fear of betraying himſelf.

He entered ſoftly into converſation with Madame de Nuiſy, talked of her daughter, made her tell all that ſhe knew, and all that he wanted to know of my convent. She enlarged in praiſe of the perfect ſecurity which innocence there enjoyed, of the vigilance of the abbeſs, and the ſtrictneſs with which ſhe prohibited all intercourſe between her convent, and the world. The whole reſult of her information was, that regulations ſeverely enforced, impenetrable walls, inacceſſible grates, and inexorable keepers divided me from him; melancholy ſubject for reflexion!

He was ſure, that I was there. But, an imprudent, and unſucceſsful attempt, whether to write to or to ſee me, might occaſion me to be taken from this convent, and removed to a greater diſtance, and beyond his ſearch. It was an unhoped for bleſſing, that I ſhould have been ſent to a place of confinement

confinement ſo near his port. His meeting with the little ſpaniel was ſtill more miraculous. But, the more he valued this piece of good fortune, ſo much the more careful ſhould he be, not to abuſe it.

Before attacking the caſtle, he began with obſerving its environs, ſituation, and aſpect. But, no hope to make his way into it, no hope was there that he might even approach the parlour. He diſcovered at laſt, that young village maids came ſometimes to the convent from the neighbouring farms, with cream, flowers, or fruits which the boarders bought at the grate. He was, as I have already told you, of a fair complexion, and his cheeks were yet covered with a ſoft down. Nothing could be eaſier or more likely to ſucceed than for him to diſguiſe himſelf, like a country girl, and to appear at the grate of the convent with a baſket of flowers under his arm, and a bundle on his head.

I went thither with my companions. And although I had ſeen Cloſan only at a diſtance, I ſhould have known him by his blue eyes and fair hair. The ſlighteſt reſemblance would have been enough to engage my attention; but the more I obſerved him ſo much the more was I moved. At laſt while my companions

companions were eager about the flowers, I fixed my eyes upon his, and perceived at once by their expreſſion, that it was my love. Come, Madam, buy my flowers, ſaid he, in a tone of ſweetneſs; here is a noſegay I have made up with great care. I took it, and as I was paying him, ſaw written upon it with his own hand; *It is for you.* Never had I felt ſuch an emotion before. The impreſſion made upon my heart by the accent of that ſweet voice which I now heard for the firſt time, the raviſhing delight with which I was affected at ſeeing ſo near me, that countenance animated by love, thoſe eyes ſparkling with fire, at the ſame time, my terror leſt ſome one of my companions, or of thoſe who were charged with the care of us, might obſerve what was paſſing between him and me, in ſhort all that is moſt overpowering in joy or fear, produced ſuch an agitation in my mind that I muſt have betrayed myſelf, if the clock had not ſtruck, and terminated the interview.

Fortunately my companions were too agreeably occupied with the flowers and fruits to think of me. They talked afterwards of the fair-haired maid, and I learned, that ſhe had promiſed to return, within three days, on the evening before the feſtival of

Capus

Capus Chriſti, and to bring flowers, to decorate the church and altar.

Returning to my cell, and indulging in ſuch reflexions as my love ſuggeſted, I could not avoid wondering at the ſtar which ſeemed to preſide over our fate, and to rule us both with equal influence. In the mean time, untying my noſegay, to put in water, I found a paper about it upon which were written the following words. "Heaven loves us, dear Philippina, and does wonders for us. Our enemies, when they think to ſeparate, bring us together, I have an office at Meaux, which is at no great diſtance from this place. At Roſay I learned where you were concealed. The ſeverity of your abbeſs in forbidding you your little ſpaniel which you kindly love, ſeems to have been ordered by heaven that I might diſcover your place of retreat. Love has taught me to contrive means by which we may ſee one another. We know each other's hearts. We knew that we loved each other before we could ſay ſo in words. Let us be unalterably conſtant. We are both orphans; neither of us has any fortune; but we are both of good families; and this is enough.—My labour will in a little time procure us a comfortable ſituation. Hope and courage are all that love requires. I have need

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of both; refuſe me not a word which may inſpire them." and it was ſigned, HIPPOLITUS CLOSAN.

Who could have been inhuman enough to refuſe the word he aſked? I tried however to intermingle reaſon with ſentiment. I acknowledged that I was affected with the kindneſs which he ſtill continued to entertain for me. But I blamed his imprudence. I ſhewed the danger of an artifice which, if diſcovered, might make me a ſubject of idle converſation in the convent; and I ended with adviſing him, both for his own peace and mine, to forget an unhappy girl who was entirely dependent on her uncle's kindneſs, and was ſatisfied with depending on him alone. In truth, I hoped that he would not follow my advice.

He came back, three days after, among a croud of young country girls, which came eagerly to deck out the church of the convent with flowers. The boarders were intruſted with the care of decorating the altar: and in the preſence of the nuns, we joined the country-girls, and, for half the day, buſied ourſelves with them, in making noſegays, garlands, and feſtoons.

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My young lover and I had thus an opportunity of placing ourſelves on our knees, before the altar, oppoſite to one another, and with nothing between us, but a baſket of flowers. Our hands moved about the flowers, but we durſt not ſuffer them to meet. With ſo many witneſſes about us, I never in my life, was in greater confuſion, or more uneaſy; yet never did I paſs any happier moments. I had my billet to deliver. I ſlipped it under a roſe; and it was, that inſtant, taken up, with admirable dexterity. After this I was more calm, and ſaw him go well pleaſed away. We were both of us far from foreſeeing what a misfortune awaited us.

Envy infects all ranks. Among the neighbouring girls, the fair maid from Creſſy, had been too much diſtinguiſhed by the beauty of her offering, and by a certain air of neatneſs, elegance, and dignity which her companions wanted. She was obſerved with jealous eyes; and malice found ſomething ſingular and equivocal in her appearance. Her ſtature, her air, her carriage, her features, her voice, and then that fair down which was juſt beginning to loſe its downy ſoftneſs—all theſe circumſtances together occaſioned ſuſpicions. Some put queſtions to him, which he eluded by taking leave

of them; but they continued to compare all theſe particulars which they had obſerved among them, of his perſon, till it was agreed that the fair maid could be none other than a gallant in diſguiſe.

This ſtory found its way into the convent. The abbeſs was informed of it: and the alarm ſpread through the little ſociety. You may eaſily conceive with what anxious curioſity my companions buſied themſelves about it; and what a variety of conjectures aroſe in their young imaginations. I did all that I could to ſhake off my uneaſineſs, and joined the opinion of thoſe who thought the thing incredible.

Thoſe young country-girls had all promiſed to come back eight days after. She from Creſſy had promiſed particularly. We waited for that time, to have our doubts cleared up. However, the abbeſs, had, in the mean time, ſet on foot an enquiry at Creſſy. I was diſtreſſed that I could not warn Cloſan of his danger.

He returned, as he had promiſed, with a ſtill finer baſket of flowers, and a more deliberate air. But, on that day, the penſioners were not allowed to go without the cloiſter. The ſervants received the offerings, and were deſired to tell the girls that the

the abbeſs wiſhed to ſee them in the parlour. They waited upon her. After praiſing their zeal, ſhe diſmiſſed them. I was ready to die when I heard that the young woman from Creſſy had been detained, and the abbeſs was interrogating her.

Whence are you? aſked ſhe, with the ſevere tone of a judge. He eaſily underſtood, that ſhe was prepared to diſbelieve whatever he might anſwer; for indeed the fair maid of Creſſy was not even known in the place to which ſhe pretended to belong. His object now, was, to eſcape himſelf, and to ſave me. If he ſhould ſuffer himſelf to be queſtioned, he was ſure to be undone. Happily, it occurred to him to amuſe the abbeſs with a ſtory which might outwit her penetration.

I was born at Creſſy, madam, ſaid he, and ſhould have lived there ſtill, had not a misfortune happened me, which obliged my father and mother to retire from Creſſy to the village of Roiſa, to place me beyond the purſuit of a raviſher who was going to carry me off by violence.—Carry you off?—Oh! my God, yes, madam, at the age of ſixteen, had it not been for my own prudence, I had been carried off by a young courtier who came often to Creſſy, and tried a thouſand arts to enſnare me. But,

thank heaven! his arts were vain. He then related the temptations, the attacks, the artifices of the young man; how he purſued him through the gardens and arbours, and how ardently he had preſſed him to go to Paris, and be a woman of quality.

The more animated his deſcription, ſo much the more was the abbeſs's attention attracted, and her anxiety moved. She wondered how ſuch a young innocent ſhould have eſcaped ſeduction; and every new danger ſhe ſpoke of, excited new alarm. The wicked wretch! cried ſhe. He was young you ſay, and his figure was perhaps agreeable?—Yes, madam, he was an handſome man, and proper, I allow; but though he was alſo gentle and inſinuating, I was not to be deluded; for in his gentleneſs, there was an air of malice and artifice. In his eyes particularly, there was ſomething odd; ſometimes they were full of languiſhing tenderneſs, and ſometimes briſk and ſparkling, like two ſtars. It was then he would ſay the tendereſt and moſt incredible things to me. Yet ſtill would not I truſt him. But, the oftener I repeated that he was a liar, ſo much the more earneſtly did he vow the contrary.—Ah! my daughter, it was your duty to flee from him. I did ſo, madam, from arbour to arbour; but he knew the turnings and windings much better than I, and

I ſtill

I ſtill found him in my way again. Sometimes I was breathleſs, and ſo weary that I was obliged to reſt me on the green.—On the green!—Then was he before me, with ſighs and tender complaints.—Before you, at your knees, my daughter?—But, I made him aſhamed of himſelf. It well becomes a young man of your quality to throw yourſelf at the feet of a poor country-girl!——He anſwered that beauty was the queen of the world. And then I was obliged to be angry, and make him riſe. I had a good deal of difficulty to diſengage myſelf out of his hands! When I puſhed them away, he only kiſſed mine. What audacity! ſaid the abbeſs, he kiſs your hands!—And if you had ſeen how he looked, madam, while he kiſſed them! This is not all.—What then!—Would you ſuppoſe it, madam? *he had the impudence one day,* to ſlip a rich diamond on my finger. But I threw it at him, and would have none of it. Go, ſir, ſaid I, never ring will I wear, but a ring given by a huſband.—Very well, my girl! ſince that time, I hope he has left you undiſturbed.—Alas! no; I had much more trouble to ſuffer.—But, why did you imprudently delay to inform your father and mother?—Alas! every time that he gave me uneaſineſs, he intreated ſo humbly to ſay nothing of it, and aſked my pardon ſo many times, and in ſo ſuppliant a voice, that

I was patient for fear of making him my enemy. At laſt, however, the wicked man one day ſurpriſed me alone, gathering ſtraw-berries, on the edge of the foreſt, in the morning, while all the birds merrily ſung—Ah! unlucky creature, what carried you there?—I have told you, madam, that I went to gather ſtraw-berries. But, it is late, I ſee, and my mother will be uneaſy at my ſtay. It is time for me to have done. A moment, ſaid the abbeſs, I would know, at leaſt———You ſhall know all, madam, I will come back to-morrow, and relate the reſt. But, if I ſhould ſtay longer now, my mother might be angry with me, and you would not have her to be angry with me. So ſaying, he curtſied, and ran away.

What an adventure! ſaid the abbeſs, to what dangers is innocence expoſed in the world! In truth, I tremble for her. I long for to-morrow, that I may hear how ſhe extricated herſelf.

Next day, ſhe expected the fair-haired maid, with extreme impatience. But, the damſel returned not. The abbeſs was then convinced that ſhe had been impoſed upon, and was highly irritated. She ſent to make the ſame enquiries at Roiſa which had been made at Creſſy. Her emiſſaries could obtain

tain no information of the perſon ſhe ſought after; but that her adventure in the convent was a ſubject of converſation through all the neighbouring villages, and that ſhe was ſuppoſed to have been rather a fair-haired young man than a fair-haired maid. I was in a ſtate of trepidation; for my companions had overheard, and told me all. The impoſtor! the villain! ſaid the abbeſs, he had deceived me, and thought to eſcape me by his lies; but I ſhall get him yet, and make him repent what he has done. She, with this, ſet herſelf to contrive, who the rogue could be, and which of us could have occaſioned his coming. She ſoon fixed upon me. My uncle had confided to her the ſtory of my love. She wrote to him an account of the adventure, and deſcribed the ſeducer againſt whom ſhe was enraged. My uncle, being ſtruck with the reſemblance, went immediately to enquire of Bliancour, how he had diſpoſed of the young clerk.—He is ſettled at Meaux, ſaid the financier.—At Meaux! that was well done! ſaid my uncle. I had ſent my ward to Meaux. He has diſcovered her. You ſhall ſee what has happened. The abbeſs has written to me.

Bliancour, already piqued at my refuſal of his ſon, will be ſtill more vexed to think that my uncle and he ſhould have undeſignedly brought his rival

and

and me together; and determined upon removing Cloſan more effectually out of the way by ſhutting him up in confinement. The miniſter was an old prelate who made others do penance for the peccadilles of his own younger years. Our enemy had more credit with him than was neceſſary, to ruin an innocent perſon.

The audacity of a young man who had taken a profane advantage of a holy feſtival, and under pretence of zeal to decorate the altars, had introduced himſelf in the diſguiſe of a woman into a convent, in purſuit of a young orphan, whom he had before peſtered with his addreſſes, in her guardian's houſe, —was repreſented to the cardinal as an act of the higheſt criminality. Yet, the old man was ſo good as to ſee nothing but libertiniſm in what the caſuiſts in his council called ſacriledge: and a few years ſpent in St Lazarus's ſeemed to him puniſhment enough for a fault for which he could find an excuſe in the recollection of his own amours. Cloſan was therefore removed to St Lazarus's.

The abbeſs had not revealed my ſecret,—or even hinted to me, that ſhe was acquainted with it. But, in preſence of the whole convent, ſhe told us, that the audacious villain was puniſhed, and named the

the place of his confinement. At the name of St Lazarus's, I turned pale, trembled, and ſaw all eyes fixed upon me, and that I was betrayed by my diſtreſs. Well! yes, cried I, ſhedding tears, I am the cauſe of his misfortune, but I call heaven to witneſs that I am innocently the cauſe of it, and that there was nothing criminal in the intentions of this unfortunate youth.

For you, Miſs, I have no doubt of your being innocent, ſaid the abbeſs, as you may ſee by your being ſtill here. But, preſume not to juſtify an impious ſeducer, a ſacriligious profaner, ſince you force me to ſpeak of his guilt in all its horror. My tears were redoubled; and although I ſtrove to command them; it was all in vain. I intreated the abbeſs to prevail with my uncle to ſend me to ſome other place. She promiſed that ſhe would. But, either ſhe hoped to ſoothe me, or my guardian took time to conſider how he might ſhut me up in cloſer confinement, or perhaps they hoped to reduce me to their own terms, and weary out my fortitude: ſo I was left to ſigh and pine away, without being removed.

It was no longer my grate, or the walls of the convent that diſtreſſed me. The walls of St Lazarus's

rus's, the locks and bars which confined my lover occupied all my thoughts. It was there oppreſſive power rigorouſly confined him whoſe only crime was, that he had loved me too well.—I viewed him alone, in deſpair, and in the agony of his grief, perhaps forcing his keepers to exert their cruelty upon him. This proſpect riſing inceſſantly upon my imagination, I watered my bed with my tears, and filled my room with half-ſtiffled groans. My priſon became to me a place of horror; and I reſolved to leave it. I ſucceeded at the riſk of my life. I ſtole from the door of the gardiner's cottage, one evening, cords which he uſed at his work, knotted them into a ladder, hung it from my window, and fixing its other end to the branches of a tree which grew near the wall, by this dangerous expedient made my eſcape. But, at day-break, when I had paſſed this danger, and made my way out into the country, what was I to do? This was an intereſting concern.——

I had more than once heard an old vicar in the neighbourhood, mentioned in the convent, as being one of the gentleſt, moſt indulgent, and moſt obliging of men. He was vicar of Mareuil. His village, and the road to it, had been pointed out to me. My intention was to go and throw myſelf at

at his feet, and acquaint him with the bold reſolution I had taken. But, it was neceſſary, that I ſhould reach him unperceived, and for this I had not time. I had ſpent the night in making my eſcape. And when I ſaw myſelf without the walls of the convent, the breaking of day renewed my fears. The country-people would ſee me, and give information at the convent. I ſhould be ſtopped, and carried back to confinement. What a ſhame would this occaſion to me! In how criminal a light would my attempt to eſcape be viewed! unhappy creature! it was nothing to ſee myſelf in captivity; but, to be diſgraced! My courage forſook me, and I began to weep. As I wept, I invoked heaven, to witneſs the innocence of my heart; and falling on my knees, recommended to God, a poor orphan, reduced to deſpair.

While I was praying, I obſerved between me and Quincy, a ſmall wood, conſiderably thick, and it occurred to me that I might conceal myſelf there till next night. I ſhall find water, ſaid I to myſelf, and for hunger I can bear it.

I now turned towards the wood, and after concealing myſelf in it, ſat down upon my little parcel, and thanked heaven for offering me this ſhelter.

Would

Would you think it? I felt joy at hearing the birds ſing there; and all thoſe ideas of liberty, love and happineſs which their ſong naturally ſuggeſts joined to ſteal away my heart from anxiety and fear, and to ſoothe it with a pleaſing reverie. I was charmed to ſee the hare with its little family about it, paying their court to Aurora, amidſt the thyme and the dew.

I did not foreſee that this was to occaſion my being expoſed to one of the greateſt dangers by which my time of life was liable to be affected.

A huntſman, with his fowling-piece under his arm came acroſs the plain, towards the wood in which I was concealed. He was young and active, and muſt ſoon have overtaken me, if I had attempted to flee; but indeed I had not ſtrength to flee. Terrified at his approach, I hid myſelf by retiring farther among the thick foliage, and there remained without moving or breathing. I never once thought of the danger I was in, of being ſhot; all my fear was, leſt I ſhould be diſcovered.

The huntſman looked about for ſome time, and ſuddenly, I ſaw him aim his piece ſtraight at the buſh in which I was hidden. He ſhot; the lead whiſtled about me! And in a moment of terror which

which I could not repreſs, I ſcreamed out, and this betrayed me.

The huntſman, little leſs terrified than I was, cried likewiſe, and aſked whether I was hurt. No, thank heaven! ſaid I. Yes, thank heaven! ſaid he, encouraging me. He then viewed me with an air of ſurpriſe and pleaſure. What a pity would it have been, and what pain ſhould I have felt, if I had killed ſo pretty a turtle! And what is ſhe doing in the wood? Expecting her mate? This tone of familiarity diſpleaſed me. You ſee, ſaid I, an orphan, perſecuted by misfortune, and ſeeking to eſcape from it. I was waiting till night ſhould come on. Night, ſaid he, ſmiling! night in a wood, and at your age! and whence came you? From a convent in which I was confined.—And where do you think of going?—To an old man not far off, who will be a father to me.—Who is that old man; I know all the neighbourhood.—Excuſe me there; this is my ſecret.—Your ſecret, child, I gueſs is ſome love-affair. There is always love in convent adventures; they are all alike. Yes, I warrant you have ſome lover whom you are forbidden to ſee, and for this, have made your eſcape. Confeſs, frankly. Finding me thus, ſaid I to him, you have a right to ſuppoſe whatever you pleaſe.

Heaven is my witneſs, that there has never been aught in my conduct, but honour and innocence. During this dialogue, his eyes were fixed on mine. I was ſitting, and he ſtanding. He had a degree of boldneſs in his countenance; and there appeared a certain expreſſion of anxiety and irreſolution in his air and aſpect. He remained for ſome time penſive and motionleſs, having his hands fixed on his gun. I was intimidated by the keenneſs of his looks, and remained alſo ſilent. What age are you? aſked he. —Seventeen years.——Seventeen years! and have you loſt your father and mother?—Alas! I have.—Are you rich?—No.—I am in eaſy circumſtances; I am unmarried; and if you want a good huſband.—I am obliged to you; but do not chuſe to diſpoſe of myſelf; I wiſh to ſpend ſome time in another convent. *Good, that! convents! nothing is ſo gloomy and diſmal.* Come, miſs, better be a jolly huntſman's houſekeeper,—a thouſand times better this, than the beſt convent in the world. He was then proceeding to relate what a joyous life we ſhould lead. I interrupted him, and begged him to begone, and continue his hunting. Begone, and leave you here till night; impoſſible! Faith, you are too handſome. I will not leave you; I muſt be your companion at night. You muſt leave me, anſwered I, otherwiſe I muſt begone myſelf, at the riſk of being known

and

and carried back to confinement.—You are much afraid of me, then?——No, but I know that it becomes me not, to be here alone with a man.—And who is there to protect you when I go?—Heaven, the guardian of innocence.——It will do more, if it protects you, than it always does for young girls in woods. And, as he ſpoke, his eyes became more animated. Leave me, ſaid I, urgently. I beſeech, I conjure you, leave me. Then he ſeemed reſolved. It is your deſire? ſaid he, I muſt obey you. But, the day is long; have you any thing to eat?—— Alas! I have nothing.—Let me then give you the bread and wine I have brought for my breakfaſt. If you pleaſe, ſaid I, and will permit me to pay for what you leave. I took out my purſe; but he had the generoſity to refuſe the money. I thanked him; and as the laſt favour I ſhould requeſt, begged him to be ſilent as to our meeting. Oh! as for the concealment of your ſecret, madam, ſaid he ſmiling, you muſt pay me for that; I muſt have no leſs than the ſmall golden heart which hangs upon that fair boſom. I cannot part with it, ſaid I; it was my mother's. I ſhould like to have it, however, ſaid he, with ſparkling eyes. Let me kiſs it, at leaſt. And as he ſaid theſe words, he put his hand to it. I moved back, in terror.

Seeing me pale, he ſtopped, and after a moment's ſilence, ſaid, in a faint and faultering voice; Madam, I am young, yet honeſt; yes, I am, and will be ſo. Adieu, I will not be the man to abuſe your ſituation. But, do not paſs the night in this wood; truſt me, do not. Till night, I ſhall watch at a diſtance, to guard you from harm. Farewel, you ſhall ſee me no more.

I have ſince reflected on the agitation in which the young man's mind appeared to be, his altered voice, the fire which animated his countenance, and ſparkled in his eyes, the fixed eagerneſs with which he gazed on the little golden heart which hung by my neck; and have wondered at the reſolution with which he left me, after giving me his bread and wine. Many heroes would have behaved leſs magnanimouſly: I queſtion if the boaſted continence of Scipio deſerved equal praiſe with that of my huntſman.

I dined on his preſents: and as I wanted reſt, after my fatigue in the night, I lay down and ſlept for a few hours. When night returned, I proceeded on my way to Mareuil.

We ſhall arrive there to-morrow, I have travelled far enough, to-day, ſaid ſhe, and muſt now reſt me.

THIRD

THIRD BREAKFAST.

The Clergyman and the Hoſpital.

I TREMBLED as I entered the clergyman's door, replied Madame de Cloſan, when the party was again aſſembled round the breakfaſt table. Young as I was, and a run-away from a convent, how ſhould I appear before an old vicar? What would he ſay of me? and what ſhould I ſay to him? the plain truth. This thought reſtored my confidence. I knocked. An old woman opened to me. What would you have? ſaid ſhe.—I would ſpeak to the vicar.—Immediately?—Immediately. I have been told that he is at all times acceſſible to the unfortunate. He is ſo, replied ſhe; and inſtantly introduced me.

The vicar received me with ſurpriſe; but with his uſual air of kindneſs. Sir, ſaid I, let me firſt beg you to recommend it to this good woman that ſhe tell no perſon, that I am in your houſe. He then called back his houſe-keeper, and after whiſpering ſomewhat to her, returned and told me, that I might make myſelf eaſy.

Sir, then replied I, protect me. I am an orphan, and extremely unhappy. If you forſake me, I can

endure life no longer. It is the reputation of your virtue and humanity that has induced Philippina Oray de Valſan to throw herſelf at your feet.

The reſolution of deſpair which he ſaw expreſſed in my countenance moved him deeply. He began with ſoothing, and promiſing me every good office in his power; and then aſked whence I came?—From Paris.—Where had I been laſt?—At Pont-aux-Dames.——Why had I left that convent?—That I might enter ſome other, equally holy, and more to my liking. That was all I wiſhed.—It is my deſire, ſaid I, to devote myſelf to the ſervice of the unfortunate; from my own ſituation I learn, that nothing in the world is more ſacred than misfortune. I am poor, yet I have the pride to deſire to be free. There is an order which was inſtituted for the relief of the poor, by the moſt virtuous, the moſt compaſſionate of men, a man whom you reſemble, Vincent de Paul; it is the order of the Gray Siſters. I could never hear it named without feeling ſtrong emotions of tenderneſs and veneration. I know nothing nobler than the purpoſes to which thoſe women have dedicated themſelves. Among them would I conceal myſelf: and, in this, ſir, I need your aſſiſtance. Do a good action by condeſcending to recommend me, I dare not ſay, by preſenting me, yourſelf.

He

He would not allow me to take the fatigue of ſaying more at this time; but, made me take ſome food, and then retire to reſt. I related to him, on the next day, ſome part of what you have heard, but with a degree of ſenſibility and ingenuous ſimplicity which I can now no longer aſſume, and which greatly affected him.

He had viewed me with pity, while he liſtened to my ſtory, and when I had ended; will you forgive me, ſaid he, for explaining the nature of your invocation. The young man is at St Lazarus's, and you wiſh to be near him. True, ſaid I, my greateſt happineſs would be to acquaint him that I was there. I will remain there ſo long as he is in confinement. During that time, I will do all that is poſſible to deſerve that I may become a happy wife and mother. When he is free, I ſhall be ſo, too; for under the good rule of Vincent de Paul, a year is the term of engagement. And if I may be, at laſt united to my lover, God will permit me to aſk this reward before the altar, for the care which I ſhall have taken of the ſick poor. If again we are denied all hopes of being united, the condition I have embraced, will afford me conſolation.

The

The vicar of Mareuil did not diſlike this contrivance for beguiling the tadium of abſence.

But, why, ſaid he, ſhould you not acquaint your relations with this laudable reſolution? They would treat it, anſwered I, as a fooliſh fancy of diſappointed love, and would make him be puniſhed, for whoſe ſake I have taken the reſolution. They would have the cruelty to envy us the happineſs of knowing, that we were near one another. I have told you, that gold only is what they value; and my lover's crime is, that he has no fortune. Take me out of their hands, otherwiſe I can no longer anſwer for myſelf.

My child, ſaid he, if you had a father and mother, all the pity I feel for your ſituation, would not induce me to detain you from them. But, you are an orphan; and a tutor's rights are, I muſt confeſs, leſs ſacred in my eyes. What I am going to do for you, is by no means prudent; and although my age and character render my conduct ſufficiently grave, yet I know that I ſhall be expoſed to ſome malicious cenſures. But, *leſs prudence, and more benevolence* has been always my motto; Courage to do good, is not courage for nothing. You aſk admiſſion into the moſt ſacred aſylum which can be choſen,

ſen, and deſire to embrace the moſt virtuous of all conditions. I will ſecond this pious, and gallant purpoſe. Remain here in concealment. When I ſuppoſe the ſearch and purſuit after you to have ceaſed, I ſhall myſelf conduct and preſent you to the abbeſs of the heroines of charity.

Within a few days after this interview, I was admitted under his auſpices, as an orphan, the care of whom had been recommended to him, he ſaid, by providence.

I was now one of the gray ſiſters, and but a few paces from my lover. But, that intercourſe between the two houſes with which my imagination had pleaſed itſelf, was abſolutely and ſtrictly prohibited: and the period of my novitiate being wholly occupied in the diſcharge of the holy duties of the character I had aſſumed, not a moment was left me for liberty or relaxation. My only conſolation was to ſee myſelf near thoſe walls in which the object of my heart heavily paſſed his hours.

But, the good curate of Mareuil had not forgotten us. The report of my elopement having been noiſed abroad, had rendered little Floretta famous, and that innocent animal had ſuffered under my diſgrace.

diſgrace. Madame de Nuiſy loudly diſavowed all knowledge of me. My daughter, ſaid ſhe, had no particular connexion with that young woman: it was only out of pity, that we obliged her by taking charge of her little ſpaniel; and that nothing from ſuch a girl may remain with me, let any perſon who pleaſes take it away. Give it to me, ſaid the good vicar, who happened, by good luck, to be preſent. But, this was the ſmalleſt of the ſervices he did us.

The dioceſe of Meaux is conterminous with that of Paris, and in the latter, the good old prieſt had a friend of his own character. Will you not be at St Lazarus' in the courſe of the approaching Lent? ſaid he to that friend. If you are, remember a young man of the name of Cloſan who is confined there for an act of imprudence, which has been conſidered as criminal. Speak kindly to him, ſoothe his uneaſineſs, and try if you can abridge the period of his confinement. Perſuade them not to ſour the native work of his heart, for I know him to be well-born: and if you have an opportunity, let him know that he will find a friend in the old curate of Mareuil.

Theſe

Theſe words being faithfully repeated to the General of St Lazarus' made an impreſſion ſo much the more favourable becauſe they came from an old man, the ſanctity of whoſe manners was known and revered, and becauſe the young man had behaved in ſuch a manner as to win the good will of thoſe about him.

The General ordered him to be called, and aſked whether he were, in any way related to the vicar of Mareuil. He replied, that he had not the honour of knowing the vicar. You have a true friend, however, replied the Lazariſt, in that worthy paſtor. He then made Cloſan tell him our little ſtory; and Cloſan related it with all the ſincerity he might. The pious Lazariſt thought that it might be proper to acquaint the Cardinal with the particulars: and that miniſter who had no averſion to love-ſtories, heard it with a degree of intereſt. Come, ſaid he to the General, theſe few months he has already been confined, are ſufficient correction for a youthful folly. At that time of life, nature is frail, as you and I can yet remember, father. Cloſan was ſet at liberty.

His firſt care, you may well ſuppoſe, was to thank his deliverer, and to enquire what paſſed in the con-

vent

vent during his abſence. When he entered the miniſter's houſe, the firſt object that met him was Floretta. Ah! thou wilt always be an omen of good fortune to me, ſaid he; and had taken her up in his arms when the vicar appeared.

Generous old man, ſaid he, to whom I owe my liberty, and perhaps more than my life,—whoſe kindneſs extends even to this little creature, you will ſurely tell me news of my Miſtreſs, and whether ſhe be ſtill in confinement in the convent of Port-aux-Dames? She is no longer there, ſaid the good vicar.——Her guardian has then removed her elſewhere?——No, ſhe is at liberty, and out of his power; ſhe is in ſafety.——You overjoy me. And where is the place of her retreat?——That I muſt not tell you: I muſt firſt know what is going to become of you.——Alas! I know not myſelf. I have loſt my poſt; and can I hope that he who gave me it, will now, after I have been thus imprudent, deign to concern himſelf about me? I muſt wait upon him, however, for *I have no other re*ſource. But, will you not have the goodneſs to crown your favours by telling me where ſhe is, whom I love more than my own life?—She is well; ſhe is waiting for you. Were you to know more, you would again be fooliſh. I will not contribute

to

any new imprudence in your conduct. You are young; you poſſeſs ſpirit and abilities, raiſe yourſelf to a ſituation in which you may live decently and creditably; ſhe ſhall then be yours. This is all I can ſay; and with this, my dear pupil, be you ſatisfied, and let us dine together, cheerfully.

Cloſan determined to return, that ſame evening, to Paris, to ſolicit an employment: and when he took leave of his generous benefactor, recommended Floretta to his care.—Yes, while I live, I ſhall take care of her, ſaid the vicar, and even, in caſe of my death, I will endeavour to provide for her. If you ſhould die, I ſhall not ſurvive you, ſaid Cloſan, for the ſecret on which my life depends, will die with you. Truly, ſaid the vicar, you make me think of that; it would be cruel, to expoſe you to ſuch a riſk; but I muſt take care that you ſuffer not by this means. Then leaving him alone, for a few minutes, he returned with a ſealed billet, and ſaid, here is your ſecret; if I ſhould chance to die, this billet will inform you where Philippina Oray de Valſan is concealed. But, you muſt give me your word, that this billet ſhall not be opened, till after my death. Conſider whether it may be better preſerved in your own hands, or in the hands of ſome notary named by yourſelf. Make your

choice; I can depend upon you, if you will anſwer for yourſelf.

O beſt of men, ſaid Cloſan throwing himſelf at his feet, you do my probity an honour of which I feel all the value, and think myſelf worthy of it. But at my age, and while the heart is full with an ardent paſſion, it would be raſh to preſume ſo much upon my own ſtrength. In ſome ſituations, we loſe the maſtery over ourſelves. This billet, you ſay, will aſſiſt me to find out Philippina Oray de Valſan; but I am not to open it, till you are no more. Well, I will not truſt myſelf. You have nobly offered to truſt me; but, I dare not accept your confidence. Put it into the hands of the notary under whom I was employed; and he mentioned his name. The good Vicar was, at this, much pleaſed with what he had done for him.

I need hardly tell you how harſh a reception Cloſan had from the ſelfiſh and ſurly Bliancour. He would ſee him, only to tell him, that he had no more favours to expect from him, and then ſhut his door upon him. However, as he had acted with aſſiduity and ability in his employment, the officers to which he was known obtained his re-eſtabliſhment; but it was in a diſadvantageous

tageous and remote ſituation upon the confines of Savoy, among the mountains of Dauphiny. This place hardly afforded neceſſaries for an obſcure and lonely life; and he would never have thought of offering me ſo uncomfortable a condition. But, the ſtar in which I have ſuch faith, followed him to the mountains of Savoy, and me in the pilgrimage which was preſcribed me when I left the convent of the Gray Siſters, at the end of my noviciate.

The hoſpital of Embrun was ſerved by thoſe Gray Siſters, and I had been ſent thither. As I was ſo young, my ſuperiors aſſigned me none but the moſt modeſt duties to perform about the ſick. One of my taſks was to prepare and adminiſter ſuch drinks as ſuited their ſituation: but I always wore a veil over my face, upon ſuch occaſions.

One day, when I approached the bed-ſide of a young man who was very ill in an ardent fever. You ſtart. Yes, it was he himſelf; for I wiſh not to ſurpriſe you. Sorrow, fatigue, and long watching had inflamed his blood; and not being well able to procure the neceſſary aſſiſtance at home, the unfortunate youth had recourſe to our cares; and had taken a chamber in the hoſpital, as reſpectable enough citizens often do.

One day then, when I preſented myſelf before him, with a cup in my hand, and wearing my veil, I ſaw him turn away his head, and put back with his hand the cup which I offered. You muſt endeavour, ſaid I, to get the better of your averſion to it; a moment's diſguſt is nothing in compariſon of health: have but a little courage. Ah! ſaid he, I have courage to die, and that is all I want. Leave me.

I had never heard his voice, above once or twice in my life: and yet, although feeble, and altered by ſorrow, it made an impreſſion upon me, but only a confuſed impreſſion. He might have recollected mine, although he had ſcarcely heard it; but the improbability of the circumſtance hindered both him and me from gueſſing immediately at the truth. It was merely from humanity, therefore, that I ſaid to him, ſir, in the name of whatever is deareſt to you in the world, refuſe me not. What I hold deareſt in the world is loſt to me, replied he. I ſhall ſee her no more, or ſhall ſee her perhaps in the arms of another. Leave me, leave me to die.

At theſe words, my emotion was redoubled, although I durſt not yet hope what I wiſhed. In a voice almoſt as faint as his own; wherefore, ſaid I, ſhould you ſuppoſe, that ſhe is raviſhed from you?

At

At the very moment perhaps when you would die for her, ſhe is hoping to ſee you again, and to live for you.

Angel of conſolation, ſaid he, turning his head about to me, would you then reſtore me not only to life, but to happineſs?—I cannot give you an idea of what I here felt, thus to find again all that I valued on earth, thus ſtretched upon a bed of ſorrow.

My firſt emotion would have prompted me to raiſe my veil. But, in the ſtate of weakneſs in in which I ſaw him, ſuch a ſudden ſurpriſe might have coſt him his life. I checked myſelf, therefore; but the effort was too much for me. My knees tottered, and the cup ſhook in my hand. Fortunately, ſiſter Thereſa, who had the inſpection of my conduct came up, and by her preſence, reſtored my courage. She repreſented to the patient, that the drink was neceſſary to him; and I recovering my ſpirits, added, Come, ſir, for love, at leaſt. Ah! for the love of her, ſaid he, what would I not do? So ſaying, he took the cup, and at one draught, drank off the contents, without any appearance of diſguſt.

My comrade was pleaſed with the gentle language in which I ſpoke to the ſick. By expreſſions of

ſympathy like theſe, ſaid ſhe, are they beſt conſoled. It is often in the mind that the illneſs is ſeated; eſpecially at his time of life.

In this accidental interview methought I ſaw a ſignal inſtance of the favouring interpoſition of heaven; and no ſooner was I left by myſelf, than I kneeled and poured out my gratitude in thankſgiving to God. But what gave me the higheſt pleaſure, was to think how greatly Cloſan would be affected, what virtuous means I had uſed to maintain my fidelity, and preſerve myſelf for him.

Siſter Thereſa remarking with what docility the patient obeyed me, left me to take care of him, but this was ſtill under her eye and conſtant obſervation. Ah! it was not in this inſtance, that my cares were meritorious. Oh! God! what duty could I have preferred to that of watching by the ſick-bed of my lover!

The next time I offered him drink; Is it ſtill, for the love of her? ſaid he—Yes, it is ſtill for the love of her.—Ah! would that ſhe knew it! If ſhe knew that it is the diſtreſs of my ſeparation from her which has reduced me to the ſtate in which I am! My ſiſter, I ſhall name her to you, when I expire.

You

You ſhall viſit a good vicar to whom ſhe is known, and tell him, that I died, adoring her. How great was virtue! or rather, how great the ſtrength with which I was inſpired by the fear of ſeeing him expire before me, if I ſhould reveal myſelf! This incredible degree of firmneſs I was able to exert. No, you ſhall not die, ſaid I to him. But, ſhe ſhall one day know what you have ſuffered, and her heart ſhall thank you. She ſhall thank you for the care you have allowed to be taken of a life which is devoted to her. Yes, to my laſt ſigh devoted, ſaid he, and held out his hand, to take the cup.

But, while I bowed to give him it, my veil hung looſely from my face, ſo that he could diſcern my features, and he making a ſudden movement, removed it entirely, and I was betrayed.—O God! great God! it is ſhe! At theſe words, I thought I ſhould ſee him expire before my eyes; and in my turn, uttered a ſhriek. My companion came running in and found him in a ſwoon, and me cold, pale, and ſtretched on the foot of the bed.

Siſter Thereſa's firſt care, was to revive the ſick youth; and then ſhe turned to aſſiſt me, blaming me for an exceſs of weakneſs, unbecoming a ſituation,

tion, in which we were required to make ourſelves familiar with ſorrow and with death.

Cloſan at length revived, and his eyes opened upon me again. Heavenly powers! what a look! No, I ſhall never forget it. It was expreſſive of the impulſive ardour of a ſoul that would gladly have quitted that body which it hardly animated, and flown into my boſom. It was ſome moments before he recovered the uſe of his voice. Aſſoon as he was able to ſpeak; make yourſelf eaſy, ſaid he to ſiſter Thereſa, this criſis will, I know, prove ſalutary. Theſe words revived my heart. *But after this* ſwoon, ſiſter Thereſa and the phyſician, thought that he ought not to be left in danger of ſuch another, till he had firſt received ſpiritual aid; and this was accordingly announced to him.

He heard the advice calmly. This, ſaid he, is an auguſt ceremony; you, my ſiſters will join in it; your attentions are ſo ſweet, ſo precious! We both promiſed to wait beſide him, and his eyes thanked us, and gave me an indiſtinct idea of what was paſſing within him.

This duty of religion having been piouſly diſcharged, the ſick perſon addreſſed the prieſt who had

had drawn down upon him the attention of heaven. Sir, ſaid he, this moment, the moſt precious in my life, muſt be diſtinguiſhed by moſt ſacred and ſolemn engagements. Deign to receive them. I ſwear in the preſence of God whoſe majeſty is round about me, that I deſire to live only that I may ſanctify before the altar the paſſion which conſumes me. I ſwear to her who is the object of it, never to breathe but for her; and if ſhe conſents, to be united with her till death. My ſiſter, added he, ſtretching out his hand to me, will you deign to receive in her name, that faith which I pledge to her, perhaps in the laſt moments of my life? My companion imagined that he was beginning to waver, and bade me give him my hand, and not thwart him; and every one about ſignified, that they looked upon this as the beginning of a fit of raving, and a proof that his fever was riſing higher. Sir, ſaid he to the prieſt, you have heard me. Whether I live or die, I have in the preſence of heaven, and of theſe holy ſymbols, eſpouſed Philippina Oray de Valſan; and you who ſtand about us, are witneſſes, that ſhe accepts me for her huſband.

I was not known among the Grey Siſters by the name of Valſan which had been firſt aſſumed by my father. But my true name Oray, as well as that of

Philippina

Philippina, were known. Thereſa was ſtruck at the ſimilitude, Oh heavens! whiſpered ſhe to me, it is your name he pronounces! I was ſilent while we remained before witneſſes: but when we were left alone; what would you have? ſaid I; heaven has led me hither, to find, on the brink of the grave, a lover whom I imagined that I had loſt. Should I willingly drive him to death and deſpair? Can I refuſe to reſtore him to life? Do not, my ſiſter, do not betray me. If he dies, I devote myſelf to the ſervice of the poor, and will live for them. But, if we can ſerve him, let heaven's will be done, ſince we have been brought together by a miracle.

We ſaw him again, that ſame evening. I told him, that Thereſa knew our ſecret, and reſpected the ſacred nature of our engagements; and that I was going to inform the good vicar of Mareuil, and to beg him to gain my uncle's conſent.

This was the true balſam which flowing through his veins, cured the wounds of his heart, allayed the burning violence of the fever, and reſtored him inſenſibly to health and life.

As he recovered, our confidant witneſſed the fortitude with which the good youth who thought me

as

as poor as himſelf, promiſed to ſurmount our misfortunes by his induſtry, and conſtancy, and aſked my pardon a thouſand and a thouſand times for having no wealth to offer me.—Ah! his heart was a treaſure more precious than all the wealth in the world.

Before his recovery was fully confirmed, the vicar of Mareuil, having received my letter, waited on my tutor at Paris, introduced himſelf, and having by the language of reaſon and benevolence, won his attention, ſaid to him; ſir, it is no vain opinion, that marriages are written in heaven before they are ſolemnized upon earth; and in this number is undoubtedly the marriage of your neice with the good young man whom you have ſo cruelly and ungenerouſly perſecuted. In ſpite of you, and without their knowledge what is commonly called Deſtiny, but which I call Providence, has repeatedly brought them together. In ſhort, they are engaged to one another by all that is moſt holy and inviolable. They now aſk your conſent.

Where is the fooliſh girl? enquired my uncle. Where is that raviſher? Inveigh not thus againſt them, ſaid the good paſtor; it is unjuſt; and although it were more reaſonable; yet it comes now too late. Your ward is innocent; and nothing can be

be purer than her heart. The young man is more than innocent; he is virtuous. Their love is already blameleſs in the ſight of God; and if you pleaſe, ſhall become ſo in the eyes of men. Blame not what is ſanctified by the tendereſt piety.

I have told you, that my uncle was devout. Sir, ſaid he to the vicar, I have fulfilled honeſtly my duties, as her guardian; and what I have done to ſave her cannot, I think, be blamed. I cannot ſee her in the ſame light in which you do; forgive my ſincerity. You think a young woman innocent who, at the age of ſeventeen, elopes out of a convent in which ſhe has been placed by her relations, and runs after a lover; yours are not ſevere morals. You approve of her pledging her faith, without her guardians conſent; and this engagement you hold to be ſacred! I bow before you; your character and heavy air awe me to ſilence, and command my reſpect.

Sir, replied the good prieſt, ſmiling, I will make a maxim of this indulgence. I am ſevere, where ſeverity is proper. But, to all rules, even to the moſt inflexible, there muſt be ſome exceptions; and this one. Your neice has eloped from the convent, but that only to aſſume in a receſs ſtill

more

more ſacred, the habit and condition of a Grey Siſter. By the beds of the ſick has ſhe paſſed two of the beſt years of her life; it was in a remote part of Daupheny where ſhe was employed in the ſervice of the poor, that ſhe again found her lover, on the brink of the grave. The unhappy youth knew her, and ſuppoſing himſelf near his laſt moments, pledged his faith to her, in the preſence of the living God. It was thus ſhe received it, and this is what you and I muſt call religious and holy.

My tutor now changed his tone, and began to excuſe himſelf. I wiſhed, ſaid he, I muſt confeſs to procure my niece an advantageous marriage. But, ſince ſhe prefers a fanciful love to more ſolid advantages, and wants only my conſent to make her happy, I give her my conſent. This is all ſhe aſks, replied the vicar. Misfortune which the world views with ſuch terror, does not affright her; they have both either courage to ſurmount, or patience to endure it; one of the Grey Siſters muſt have learned to ſuffer poverty. No, Sir, ſaid my uncle with a ſigh, ſhe is not poor; and I am ready to reſtore her fortune. What call you, her fortune, returned the vicar. Has ſhe any fortune? She has replied my uncle, in a tone of ſorrow! She has an hundred thouſand crowns in ready money, of

which two thirds was earned by the labour of her poor father. The reſt is the fruit of my prudent management of what he left her, during theſe twelve years. My cares have been well laid out, truly! An hundred thouſand crowns, ſaid the vicar in aſtoniſhment! Alas! yes, ſaid my uncle, ſtill uneaſy, an hundred thouſand crowns, in gold! think Sir, how advantageouſly ſhe might have married, if ſhe had followed my advice; and what regret I feel in giving her to a young man who has nothing. But, it is her own doing, unhappy girl! Heaven be praiſed! Let her come, and receive this inheritance! It is hers. I have taken faithful care of it.

The vicar who gave us afterwards an account of this ſcene, could not help ſmiling at the remembrance of my uncle's diſtreſs, and the contraſt between his ſighs and the joy of our good protector. Be comforted, Sir, ſaid he, in reſpect to your niece's fortune: ſhe will make a good uſe of it. She will not forget her vow to be a ſiſter to the poor, and a reſource to the unfortunate. He next applied to my ſuperiors to recall me to Paris, where matters of great concern required my preſence. At the ſame time he wrote to our young convaleſcent, to come to him, as ſoon as he was fully recovered.

Cloſau

Clofan came alone: I followed ſoon after; and the year of my vows being expired, the vicar came and carried me to the houſe of my guardian. We found him in a better humour. His neigbour, the notary, had conſoled him, by kind praiſes of his clerk. For this good office alſo were we indebted to the vicar of Mareuil: for when he depoſited the billet which I mentioned in the hands of the notary, he had informed himſelf of the young man's conduct, character, and manners: and upon hearing nothing but what was favourable, had begged the notary to take what pains he could to remove my guardian's prejudices.

The ſame notary preſented his young friend to my uncle, and in the preſence of the good vicar and him, drew up our marriage contract. My uncle ſighing, aſſured me of the ſucceſſion to his own fortune, and promiſed not to impair it. He kept his word, I muſt not forget to tell you, that Floretta was one of the witneſſes of the contract.

The vicar had concealed from us both, the ſecret of our fortune. But, we both knew the ſecret of each other's hearts; and this would have been enough to us. The other to be ſure makes no unpleaſant addition to it. Ah! cried Clofan, when he heard

of the hundred thouſand crowns, ſhe will then have all that can be wiſhed! But, I ſhall be much more proud and happy than ſhe; for I ſhall owe all to her, and ſhe nothing to me. I cannot allow, ſaid I, of this mortifying diſtinction. We were poor when we married. This fortune falls upon us, like a ſhower from heaven, and we gather it in common; we are therefore equally rich.

Thus was our union completed. Three children were the happy fruits of the marriage. They have already had an inheritance from their father; and when death mingles my aſhes with his, they will ſucceed alſo to what he has left me. What he left me, is this eſtate. When my huſband bought it, he ſent for the huntſman from the little wood. He ſettled him here; and that worthy man, with his children about him, ſpent his days here, beſide us, and in our ſociety. He is ſtill alive. You have ſeen him. It is he with the white hair; his children are the tenants of my farms.

The abbeſs heard of my marriage, and bleſſed heaven for the event. Mademoiſelle de Nuiſy was married, ſome time after me, and continued my intimate friend; my ſons eſpouſed her daughters. The good vicar who had come to ſpend his latter

days

days with me, bleſſed them, before his death. They have fulfilled his wiſhes and mine; for they live happily together. May they be as long happy as we have been. This is all I wiſh for them. But, may they beware of confining their children! For love is much leſs dangerous when it comes in at the door, than when it enters by the window.

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In the year 1761, Meſſ. Cramer, Forſkal, Van Haven, Baurefiend, and Niebuhr, by the orders, and at the expence of the King of Denmark, ſailed from Copenhagen, upon that expedition. Each had a particular taſk aſſigned him, for which he ſeemed well qualified by the previous courſe of his life and ſtudies. Michaelis, the celebrated Orientaliſt of Germany, the acute commentator upon Biſhop Lowth's Prelections on Hebrew Poeſy, had put into their hands a liſt of queſtions relative to the objects to which they were to direct their enquiries; and pointing out what facts it might be of importance for them to aſcertain. They proceeded, in a Daniſh ſhip of war, by Marſeilles, Malta, Conſtantinople, and Smyrna, to Alexandria in Egypt. After a reſidence of ſome time in Egypt, and various excurſions through that country, they ſailed down the Red Sea; by Djidda, to Loheia in Arabia. To explore Arabia was the chief deſign of their expedition. They therefore travelled carefully through it, were at pains to acquaint themſelves familiarly with the language, and attended, indeed, to every object that could attract the notice of intelligent travellers, or concerning which it was likely that information might be expected from them, upon their return to Europe. Their reſearches were unfortunately interrupted by the death, firſt of one, and, ſoon after, of another of the party. The health of the reſt was faſt declining. To avoid the malignant effects of a climate and a mode of living which their conſtitutions were unfit to bear, they were obliged to avail themſelves of the return of an Engliſh veſſel, from Djidda to Bombay, and flee the fatal coaſt of Arabia. In the courſe of the voyage, another of theſe travellers died; and ſoon after their arrival at Bombay, a fourth; ſo that Mr Neibuhr only remained, to bring the papers of his companions, and the curioſities which they had collected, home to Europe. He was honourably received, and generouſly rewarded by the Court of Denmark.

Soon after his return, he publiſhed, under the auſpices of the Daniſh Sovereign, two ſeparate works, in which

which he laid before the world, the information which he and his companions had obtained in the courſe of their travels; his *Account of his Travels*, in four volumes 4to, and his *Deſcription of Arabia*, in one. Theſe works were a valuable addition to our knowledge of the ſtate of ſociety and manners in the Eaſt. They throw new light upon many obſcurities in the ſacred writings. They exhibit modifications of the human character, ſtrikingly different from thoſe which we are chiefly accuſtomed to contemplate. They repreſent Oriental literature in a pleaſing and intereſting aſpect. They communicate a multiplicity of facts which ought to be known to every European, whom trade, curioſity, or political employment may lead to viſit the countries of the Eaſt.

But, a page interſperſed with Arabic characters, does not appear pleaſing or beautiful to every European eye. Quarto's, however richly filled, are too ponderous volumes, to be taken up by every reader. Levity, flippancy, mad flights of fancy, and tales that ſtagger even ſimple credulity, are ſo generally reliſhed and expected in books of travels, that, without ſuch qualities, it is a matter of wonder, when the narrative of any traveller obtains general notice. Theſe conſiderations have induced a learned perſon abroad, who ſaw that, although in the higheſt eſteem among the learned, Mr Neibuhr's two works did not circulate ſo generally as they deſerved, among ordinary readers, to make an abridgement of both, in two volumes 8vo: leaving out the leaſt intereſting, and leaſt important parts of his information; but retaining the whole ſeries of the adventures of Mr Neibuhr and his companions, and every detail of facts, in which amuſement and inſtruction ſeemed to be happily united. This abridgement is the work now offered to the Public. The tranſlator has carefully compared it with the books from which it is formed, and conſiders it as very ably executed. He is confident that it merits that favour from the enlightened Britiſh reader, which he flatters himſelf, it will not fail to obtain. He has done all that he could though he fears unſucceſsfully, to tranſlate it with eaſe, fidelity and ſpirit.